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Geo. W. Atkinson.

THE

WEST VIRGINIA PULPIT

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

SERMONS FROM

LIVING MINISTERS.

WITH

PERSONAL SKETCHES OF THE AUTHORS.

EDITED BY

GEO. W. ATKINSON, A. M.

"Oh! the good we may be doing, While the years are rolling on."

WHEELING:

FREW, CAMPBELL & HART, STEAM BOOK & JOB PRESS.

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DEDICATION.

TO

THE NOBLE MEN OF GOD

Who Have Devoted

THEIR LIVES AND THEIR ENERGIES

To the upbuilding of

THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Among the hills and valleys of West Virginia,
This volume is affectionately
Dedicated by the
EDITOR.

PREFACE.

The authors of the sermons herein contained are well known clergymen of the West Virginia Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church. They are, in every respect, worthy of the recognition I have given them. Indeed, they deserve greater praise. There are others in the Conference, however, equally deserving; but it was not possible to include sermons from all of them in one volume. Farther on, it is hoped, another similar volume may be given to the public.

No two of the sermons, herein contained, are upon the same topic. It is not often, therefore, that such a variety of interesting themes are discussed in one volume. I hazard nothing in saying that whoever reads these discourses, will not only find them profitable, but will find them agreeable and interesting, as well.

One new feature of this publication, is the Personal, or Biographical Sketches of all the ministers who have sermons in the book. These Sketches were carefully prepared, and

in them all fulsome praise was avoided. The editor made no statement in any of them, which he did not believe to be true and just.

The sole object of this volume, is to do good. It is expected that it will be read in thousands of the Christian homes of West Virginia; and the editor sincerely trusts that it may inspire many, who are out of Christ, to embrace the Savior. If it does this, its publication will not be in vain.

"In all the way through life, the Gospel sheds
Its kind and healing beams o'er all our woes:
And when our days are done, it lights the path
That leads us on to brighter, happier scenes;
And it will live and shine when all beside
Has perished in the wreck of earthly things."

G. W. A.

WHEELING, March, 1883.

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PERSONAL SKETCH.

One of the heroes of West Virginia Methodism—a leader of the Lord's hosts among us, is the Rev. Gideon Martin, D.D. Though, strictly speaking, not an old man, yet, with many of his brethren who are called old in the church, he has held aloft the flag-staff of truth for many, many years, and bore it on to glory and to victory. He is truly the hero of many battles, and the conqueror of many foes; and for his valiant services in the cause of God, he is now, and always will be, held in grateful remembrance by his brethren and friends.

He was born in Lewis county, Virginia, now Barbour county, West Virginia, April 30, 1815. His father, Stephen Martin—son of Joseph Martin, an Englishman, who died at Yorktown about the time of the battle there between Washington and Cornwallis—was brought from East to West Virginia in 1779, being then about seven years of age. At that time, the territory now embraced in West Virginia, was an almost unbroken wilderness. He grew up to manhood and married Miss Catharine Reger, of a family eminently fitted for pioneer life. The subject of this sketch was the fifth son who graced that happy union.

Brother Martin, according to the custom among the early settlers of our State, was brought up on a farm. This was his chief occupation until he was twenty-one years of age. In referring to his experience of farm life, Brother M. remarked, "I have always regarded it as among the most independent and honorable callings; and I confess frankly, that I have a liking for it to this day."

His educational facilities, in common with others of that day, were the district schools—there being neither academies nor colleges within reach. At a later period, he was favored with a single term at a high school, taught by Professor Morris. As a compensation for the lack of a thorough education in early life, he has subjected himself, all through his ministerial career, to a rigid course of reading, and the study of theological works and other good books, from which he might obtain useful knowledge. In this way, he stored his mind with a large fund of valuable material. While I would not depreciate the importance of a collegiate training, yet after all, a thorough education can only be gotten by constant application to books, all through life. In this way most of our early preachers were educated.

Brother Martin was early impressed with a sense of his sinfulness, and the need of pardon. His parents were both members of the M. E. Chuch, had prayer in the family, and read the Scriptures. All this had a tendency to restrain their children from evil, and incline them to a religious life. After several fruitless efforts, in his sixteenth year, he sought and obtained a sense of God's pardoning mercy. Of that one great truth, he feels the utmost assurance to this day. He was received into the church by Rev. J. L. Irwin.

In a few years he was made a class-leader, and soon after, he was given license to exhort. During this period, he says he was greatly exercised and powerfully tempted. On one occasion he went so far as to openly rebel, by refusing to go to one of his appointments for religious services. This, however, humiliated him so severely, that he was effectually cured from everything like skepticism.

About Christmas, 1836, he received license as a local preacher, signed by Rev. J. G. Sansom, P. E., by whom he was at once employed and sent as supply on old Harrison circuit. The following July, 1837, he was admitted on trial into the Pittsburgh Conference. In 1839, he was ordained Deacon by Bishop Soule, and in 1841, Elder by Bishop Roberts. Like all true ministers of the Word, in view of the great magnitude of the work, and his great responsibility, he felt that

> "'Tis not a cause of small import,
> The pastor's care demands,
> But what might fill and angel's heart,
> And fill a Savior's hands."

I cannot refrain from quoting a paragraph from a recent letter received from Dr. Martin. He says:

"Mine has by no means been an easy or remunerative work. Over the hardest and most difficult circuits in West Virginia have I traveled—one circuit being 300 miles in compass. Besides a number of years on circuits, I have filled six stations, traveled as Presiding Elder sixteen years, and served in the Union army as Chaplain in the 15th Regiment West Virginia Volunteer Infantry, three years. Three times have my brethren honored me with a seat in the General Conference. My early associates in the ministry are nearly all gone; and my own dear children, more than half of them, like withered flowers lie mouldering in the dust. But, 'Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people and unto the Gentiles.'"

Dr. Martin preaches the Gospel with power and effect. Many hundreds have been received into the church by him, scores and scores of whom

> "Sleep their last sleep, and have fought their last battle,
> No sound can awake them again."

Many more are on the way. Down the years the old preacher is gliding, and his flock are following on. Years and storms may come and go. Trials, too, will gather round ; but amid them all will stand triumphant the true soldier of the Cross, and by-and-by will be gathered home to God.

We also are passing away, and should

> "Walk thoughtfully on the silent, solemn shore
> Of that vast ocean we must sail so soon."

It was an appropriate recognition of many years of earnest toil and study, when, about a decade ago, Mount Union College conferred on Brother Martin the hororary degree of Doctor in Divinity.

SERMON I.

BY

REV. GIDEON MARTIN, D.D.

THEME:—THE ATONEMENT—ITS NECESSITY.

TEXT:—"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."—ROM. VIII: 3, 4.

Until regenerated, according to the showing of St. Paul, all persons are under the killing power of the law. "By the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation," and the law could not pardon or liberate them. But to "Them who are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation," because they have been freed from the law of sin and death, "By the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." "For what the law could not do," &c.

I. THE WEAKNESS OF THE LAW.

The law is spiritual and holy, and designed for holy ends by its divine author. Nevertheless there were some things it was unable to do. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." Though there were some things it could not do, being weak through the flesh, we are not to infer that this weakness was either inherent or insufficient in all points.

1. That it was not, may be seen by reference to God's method of dealing with offenders under the

divine government. The Scriptures clearly point out two methods. The first is of a strictly legal character. It consists of a just and impartial statute, a strong executive, a prompt and vigorous administration over subjects invested with the powers of obedience. This legal principle, it is claimed, lies at the foundation of all human governments. But it is seen alone in its perfection in the treatment of rebel angels under the divine administration. The process of adjudication was so prompt, impressive and awful, that one demonstration of the law availed to stay the plague and preserve the unfallen angels in their allegiance to God, so far as we know, from that time until the present. Then, in its legal bearing, it is not weak, but "all powerful" in the infliction of its penalties upon those who violate its precepts.

2. Though strong in its legal bearing, it was weak in other respects; there were some things it could not do. It could not furnish to Adam, nor any of his posterity after the fall, the ability to meet its requirements, or fulfill its own righteousness. The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he "Cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will."* "Man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually." The ability to keep the law was lost, and to suppose the law able to restore it, is to suppose it able to accomplish just what the text affirms it could not do, "In that it was weak through the flesh."

3. The weakness of the law is seen in another respect. When its precepts are violated, it has no ability to pardon the offender. It cannot absolve from guilt, nor purge away the defilement of sin. It is wholly unable to impart purity and fitness for heaven.

*See Article VIII of Religion.

It is the rule of righteousness, that judges of the moral quality of men's actions, condemns the wrong and approves that which is right; but it lacks the ability to pardon the violator of its precepts. "By the law is the knowledge of sin, but by the deeds of law shall no flesh living be justified in the sight of God." "The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better covenant did; by the which we draw nigh to God. For by him all who believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Now the weakness of the law was not inherent, but "through the flesh." As the carnal and rebelious principle in man had obtained the ascendency, and as he was involved in transgression, the law was rendered inefficient to undo the works of the flesh, and to bring the sinner into a state of favor and acceptance with God.

II. THE ATONEMENT—ITS NECESSITY.

Its necessity is found in the inefficiency of the law to save sinners, and harmonize them with the divine government; but what it failed to do is accomplished by the Atonement.

The atonement involved a departure from the legal method, as it had become impracticable. "If a law could have been given that could have given life, then verily salvation would have been by the law." But this involved a moral impossibility, hence the necessity of modifying or introducing a new mode of procedure. And it was equally important that this new mode of procedure should be in harmony with the former, or, that the Gospel should harmonize with the law. The Jews regarded them as being opposed, the one to the other, and the one as making void the other. And doubtless much of their opposition to Christ and to Christianity arose from this mistaken view. With the view of correcting this fatal error, St. Paul inquired of them, "Is the law against the promises? or, do we make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea we establish the law." They were

not in conflict; the one by no means displaced the other. On the contrary their energies were united in one grand scheme to accomplish what neither could effect without the other. What the legal method failed to do, is now accomplished by the atonement of Christ.

1. The atonement was necessary to satisfy the claims of justice.

"Justice," says Dr. Bledso, "has two distinct significations, designated by their epithets, *retributive* and *administrative.* By retributive justice is meant that attribute which inclines God to punish an offender, on account of the demerit and hatefulness of his sins. Administrative justice inflicts punishment to secure general good, by securing the ends of a wise and good government."

Now, in what sense is the death of Christ to be regarded as a satisfaction to the claims of justice? In both senses? Certainly not; for if so, then no one could suffer thereafter without the penalty being twice exacted. Then, was it retributive justice, the claims of which were satisfied by his death? Let it be kept in mind that retributive justice required the punishment of the individual offender and no one else, and that, too, for his own offense. It admitted no substitute. Its object is personal guilt, and consequently it cannot be satisfied, except by the punishment of the individual offender himself. But as Christ was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," it was morally impossible that he should become liable to the infliction of retributive justice, or that he could satisfy its claims upon another.

Then, the design of Christ's death was to satisfy the claims of administrative justice, which inflicts punishment with the view of securing the ends of good government, by bringing every adverse disposition into harmony with wise and healthful laws for the good of all; and it is capable of yielding to any expedient by which the end may be best accomplished. The expedient to which it yields in this case, was the death of Christ; not for sins of his own, for he "knew no sin," but for ours. "He was made

sin,"—that is, a sin offering for us. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He died, the just for the unjust, with the view of reconciling us to God. The claims of administrative justice, the design of which was the ends of good government, being now satisfied by the death of Christ, the legal barrier is removed, a new and living way of access is opened up to God, and now "God can be just, and still the justifier of all, who by a hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him."

"For all, for all the Savior died,
For all my Lord was crucified."

2. The atonement was necessary, also, to supply the powers of obedience to the divine government. In the fall, that gracious ability was lost; and it was lost as a consequence of other losses, and not as the cause of them. But for this, a simple restoration of the powers of obedience would have been all that was necessary to our restoration. But sin caused depravity, and depravity a want of capacity. From this view of the subject, we see the necessity of the condemnation of sin, in the very commencement of the work of man's restoration to the favor of God. For this purpose, "God sent his own Son into the world, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh." By becoming a sin offering, Christ has passed the sentence of condemnation and death upon sin. On account of it, we were under the sentence of condemnation; but now, by reason of what Christ has done, sin stands candemned to death and destruction. Had man retained the power to obey, his way to God would have been by the law; but now it is by Christ, who has redeemed us from the curse of the law. Christ says, "I am the way; no man cometh to the father but by me." By Christ's death the legal barrier has been removed, sin condemned and the gracious ability to come to God through Christ imparted to all. And even more; a measure of light and of grace is given to every man to profit withal—the ability to repent and to accept of pardon through the merits of Christ by the aid of the Holy

Spirit; and by the proper exercise of this restored ability, we obtain "pardon, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Now from the very moment of our adoption as children, we are invested with the gracious ability henceforth to walk in all the commandments of God blameless, which, if we do, we shall stand justified in the sight of the law. But if we fail, by the law we shall be condemned, since sin in this case would be a voluntary abuse of the gracious ability to keep the whole law. Not that we suppose, in the event of back-sliding, a strictly legal course would be adopted. For the scriptures fully warrant us in the conclusion, that the back-slider may repent and receive pardon, though there could be no just ground of complaint, if God afforded but a single opportunity to each one to be saved through the merits of Christ.

3. The atonement was necessary to supply motives of obedience to the divine government. Motives have to do with the will, the intelligence and the sensibilities of men. To avail anything, motives must be presented to the will, either through the one or the other of these channels, or through both. And it is owing to this fact that the Christian world is divided into two great classes, distinguished by the considerations which determined them to be religious. Some act from principle, from a sense of duty and obligation; others, and perhaps the larger class, from feeling. And this latter class is not unfrequently severely criticized and condemned. But why should it be so, since only a few can reason well. God has wisely provided us with both, at least in a measure, so that if not reached in one way they may be reached in another. I love an intelligent Christianity. We should all be able to "render a reason for the hope within us." Commenced, it may be, in the intellect, but if genuine and thorough, it will reach the heart and end in feeling at last. Can a sufficient reason be offered why the stricken sinner should not cry out, now, as did the Philipian jailor, "What must I do to be saved?" Or the "heart" Christian, in imitation of the saints above, should shout, "Salvation to God and the Lamb."

Motives addressed to the will, through the intellect, may be drawn from various considerations. God's demands are founded in reason. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice wholly acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." It is just; "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price." It is ennobling; to Christianity we are severally indebted for our laws, arts and civilization. "Righteousness exalteth a nation." It inures to our welfare, both temporally and spiritually; "has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." It includes all that is worth a thought or an effort. By his intellect, moral principles are discovered, appreciated and embraced; and God having furnished us with the powers of reason, would have us exercise them. "Come, let us reason together"

Motives addressed to the will, through the sensibilities, may be drawn from the fear of punishment. All who live and die in the indulgence of sin, according to the Scriptures, will be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God and the glory of his power." As the wheat and tares at harvest are separated, and as the tares are gathered into bundles and burned, so shall it be with the wicked in the day of final accounts. Though some urge that "fear cannot act as a motive to obedience," it nevertheless does act as a motive to personal safety. That their city might be spared, and the judgments of God be averted, they repented in sackcloth and ashes; and to the Jews the Savior said, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom, and ye yourselves cast out." Hence, by the Savior himself is a direct appeal to their sensibilities. To be finally and forever separated from their venerable fathers, would be promotion of the deepest anguish of spirit—"weeping and gnashing of teeth."

But what shall be said of the great love of God, wherewith he loved us as a motive to obedience? Here is the moving cause of our redemption. Then Christ,

the gift of God, stands as the procuring cause. The object had in view was the world's recovery from sin and death, and obedience to the Divine law and life eternal. The atonement was designed to inure to our benefit in both worlds. It involved much—Christ's humiliation, sufferings and ignominous death. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son." Is it possible for anyone to view the subject in this light, as involving all the shame and pain endured by the Savior in making an atonement for us, and not to feel—feel keenly a sense of guilt and shame?

One has said, "a sense of duty is, indeed, a master power for good." But is not love a higher motive? Love is divine and saintly; it charms and bids us come. It is the highest possible motive, and is required both by the law and the Gospel; and having exemplified the love of the father, and his own, by laying down his life for the sheep, he asks our love in return. The Savior asks it as a life principle. "The love of Christ constraineth us," is the language of the great Apostle to the Gentiles; "because we thus judge, if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Now, although the law had been rendered weak—inefficient to undo the works of the flesh; and to bring the sinner into a state of pardon and acceptance with God, that work was fully accomplished by the atonement. When the law failed, the atonement comes in. By it the legal barrier has been removed, sin condemned, the powers of obedience to the Divine Government restored, and motives of obedience, high as heaven, deep as hell, and lasting as eternity, furnished to every one. Then, if any one perish, it will be the result of a voluntary rejection of the atonement. The sinner, until he repents, is just as guilty and liable to the inflictions of retributive justice, as he was before Christ died. I say, *until he repents*,—for "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

In conclusion: Though sin has debased, divided, and scattered our race, the Apostle sees, in the atonement, the means of our complete restoration to the favor and image of God; and the "gathering together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth."

Then, "unto him that is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end"—Amen.

PERSONAL SKETCH.

James Lawrence Clark* was born in the city of Baltimore, February 12, 1814. His ancestors were all Scotch Presbyterians —his father and mother being the only Methodists on either side of the house. His father, James Clark, received the preliminary classical education for the Presbyterian ministry; but not accepting the Calvinistic doctrine, and not believing that God had called him to the work of the ministry, he declined to proceed farther in education for that particular work. For a long series of years, up to the time he left the city, he was a constant member of the City Council from the old Fourth ward, and was always elected without solicitation on his part. He was appointed by the Council to draft a law for the establishment of the first public schools in Baltimore, and was sent by Council to Annapolis to secure its passage by the Legislature. After the enactment of the law, he was appointed by the Legislature the commissioner to inaugurate the schools. For a long series of years, to the time of his death in 1876, in the 95th year of his age, he was an official member of the church.

Dr. Clark's mother, Agnes McMillan, was converted and united with the M. E. Church in her 19th year, and by her step father was persecuted for her religious choice. Thomas Paine, the noted skeptic, was employed to reason her out of her religious belief, but was worsted in the argument, and admitted that she was on the safe side, let it be as it may.

James L. Clark received his education at a classical school, taught by Rev. G. Morrison, D.D., a Presbyterian clergyman, in Baltimore, who afterward transferred the school to Dr. Smith. He was brought under religious influences in early childhood, and attended the Sunday school class meetings connected with Asbury Sunday School, No. 3, to which he belonged, which school is now connected with Monument Street Church, Baltimere. While a member of this Sunday school, in connection with other religious boys, he organized a juvenile missionary society, of which he was the Treasurer. It was at this time that the missionary fire was kindled in his heart, which led him afterward to consecrate himself to the work of the ministry.

He was licensed to preach in February, 1841, and was received

* Named after the immortal Lawrence, who with his dying breath said, "Don't give up the ship."

into the Pittsburgh Conference, on trial, in July, 1841. He was ordained Deacon by Bishop Soule in 1843, and Elder by Bishop Hamline in 1845. At the formation of the West Virginia Conference in 1848, he fell within its bounds, and, although many inducements have been held out to him to change conferences, he still remains where Providence placed him, in the beginning of his ministerial career.

He traveled the following circuits: Smithfield, Cadiz, Morefield, in Ohio, and Harrisville, Weston, Kingwood, Palatine, Monongalia, in Virginia, and Oakland, in Maryland. In the course of his long and useful life in the ministry, he has filled the following stations, and always with acceptibility to the people: Charleston, Chapline Street and North Street, Wheeling, Triadelphia, Grafton, Clarksburg, Cameron and Fairmont. He also traveled the Charleston, Wheeling and Parkersburg Districts as Presiding Elder.

On Harrisville Circuit, he preached twenty-nine times every three weeks, and eighteen months of the time averaged two sermons a day. Palatine Circuit, at the time Dr. Clark traveled it, embraced what is now Palatine, Smithtown and Morgantown Circuits. I mention these facts to show the vast amount of work Dr. Clark has done, and the wonderful powers of endurance with which he is possesed. Even now, he can undergo more hardships than many of our younger men.

Dr. Clark twice represented his Conference in the General Conference of the church. He was nine consecutive years Secretary of the West Virginia Conference, and for many years he has been Treasurer of the West Virginia Educational Society, and also Treasurer of the Conference Permanent Fund.

August 31, 1842, he was married to Miss Mary Louisa Berger, who, prior to her marriage, had thoughts of going as a missionary to Africa. Mrs. Clark has shared with her husband all the privations of an itinerant life for more than forty years. They sometimes were forced to live on potatoes and salt. Once, the Doctor says, their children cried for something to eat, when they had nothing to give them. In the early days of Methodism, the privations of an itinerant minister were many and great, and Dr. Clark had his full share of them; but he always managed to weather the storm, never failing to do his duty, faithfully and well. He and his faithful companion enjoy the pleasures of a comfortable home in Parkersburg, and expect, by-and-by, to enter into the joys of their eternal home in the life that is beyond.

Dr. Clark is still in the active ministry, and expects to labor still more in the field of the Master.

The honorary degree of Doctor in Divinity was conferred upon him, a few years ago, by the Ohio Wesleyan University, one of the best and highest grade educational institutions in the West; and it is universally admitted, by those who are familiar with Bro. Clark's attainments in theology, that the honor was worthily bestowed.

The years are rolling on, and Brother Clark is nearing the land of rest—"the summer land of song."

"Only a few more burdens must he carry
In heat and toil beneath the scorching sun;
Only a little longer must he tarry—
Only a little longer 'till He come,'

"Only a little more of life's long journey
Through the world's desert, till the day is done;
Only a few more desert scenes of conflict,
Only a few more Marah's 'till He come.'

"Only a little longer, thinking gladly
Of the uprising of the brighter Sun;
Only a little longer, waiting sadly,
In the fast falling twilight 'till He come.'

"Only a few more billows wildly tossing,
Beating him backward from the longed-for shore;
Only a few more snares, his pathway crossing—
Then all the trials of the way'll be o'er."

SERMON II.

BY

REV. JAMES L. CLARK, D.D.

THEME:—THE GREAT COMMISSION.

TEXT:—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."—MARK XVI: 15.

This last commandment of the blessed Savior was given to his disciples, and through them to his Church, under circumstances peculiarly interesting. He had finished the work he came into the world to accomplish. He had selected his chosen witnesses. He had instructed them by precept and example. He had offered himself as the sacrifice for the sins of a guilty world, amidst scenes the most stupendous the world ever saw. He had broken the bars of death, and triumphed over the power of the grave. He had by many infallible proofs, showed himself alive to his Disciples, for the space of forty days. And now, the time having come for him to be received up into Heaven, he led his disciples forth as far as to Bethany, and there, amid the hallowed recollections of past associations, while lifting up his hands to bestow on them his parting blessing, he delivered unto them his final command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

How emphatic every word. "Go." You are not to wait until you are sent for, and receive a special call, with numerous signatures, well footed up with mater-

ial aid and comfort. But go and call the people, and extend to them the gracious invitations of my redeeming love. Do not send others out into the hedges and highways to gather in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind, and bind burdens upon them, that you would not touch with one of your fingers. But "Go ye" every one of you, and be mutual sharers of the burdens and sacrifices of this itinerant system that I have introduced, and which I now command you to perpetuate. Confine not your labors to Jerusalem, nor yet to Judea, but "Go ye into all the world," to the gentile as well as the Jew, and proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, until the North gives up and the South no longer keeps back, and my sons are brought from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth. Neither limit ye your labors to the populous cities and towns, or to the wealthy villages; but go ye into the hedges and highways; take the by paths and go out into the wilderness, and hunt up the lost sheep which have strayed away from the fold. Go to the rich and to the poor; to the bond and to the free; to the civilized and to the barbarian; to the moral and to the vile, to every creature under Heaven go, and preach the gospel.

I. IN PRESENTING OUR SUBJECT, LET US, IN THE FIRST PLACE, CONSIDER THE NECESSITY OF MISSIONARY OPERATIONS.

1. There is a necessity for missionary operations growing out of the moral condition of the world. Look at the fearful picture that the pen of inspiration has drawn of man's deplorable state. "There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them

over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, malicious, ness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud-boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedience to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." Is this sad picture too darkly colored? Let observation and conscience answer.

Where are those found who have never trampled upon the authority of God, and resisted the influences of his spirit? Look abroad upon the world, and what is its history but degradation and crime. Look at the ignorance, the profanity, the licentiousness, the dishonesty and the intemperance that prevails, even in our own highly favored country. See the cruelty of the savages who roam over our western wilds. Contemplate the senseless mummeries and superstitious traditions of Popery, by which it makes the commandments of God of none effect. Look at the devil worshippers of India, who enshrine satan in their hearts instead of God. Behold the Hindoo widow burn upon the funeral pyre of her husband, and the devotee of Juggernaut cast himself beneath the bloody wheels of the car of his false god. See the heathen mother offer her own babe in sacrifice; while children imbrue their hands in the blood of their parents, rather than support them in old age. Witness the beastly licentiousness of idol worship, where crime, and lust of the most debasing character, is the highest adoration, paid to heathen gods. In the general disregard of the authority of God, in the general prevalence of ignorance, of infidelity, of fraud, of violence, of imposture and of licentiousness, we have a strong evidence of the truthfulness of this fearful description of man's moral condition; and on this fact we found our first plea for the necessity of missionary operations.

2. Again: Missionary operations are necessary, to preserve the Church in a healthy and prosperous condition.

The whole scheme of man's redemption and salva-

tion, as devised by God, is missionary in its character. Christ, the great head of the church, was a missionary. He did not remain in heaven and *send* invitations of mercy to our sin-ruined race; but he came himself to earth on an errand of love, to labor, and suffer, and die, that he might gather the outcasts of the human race, with the arms of his love, and press them with filial embrace, to the bosom of their God.

The Holy Spirit is a missionary spirit, *sent* forth by the Father and the Son, into the world, to reprove of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and to give power to the church, and impart consolation to the believing heart.

Angels are all missionary beings. Whatever may be the position they occupy in regard to the extension of Christ's kingdom in this world, they are "all ministering spirits, *sent* forth to minister to them, who shall be heirs of salvation." If it were possibile for an anti-missionary spirit to enter Heaven, the flame of pure missionary zeal and love, which burns in angelic bosoms, would burn such a being out of existence there.

Every truly converted soul is missionary in its feelings. Our poet has beautifully expressed this, when he sings

> "O that the world might taste and see,
> The riches of his grace;
> The arms of love that compas me,
> Would all mankind embrace."

As the Church is composed of individuals, in order to make her what she ought to be, God has strongly infused the missionary spirit into the feelings that flow from a converted state. And when the Savior established his Church, he constituted it a missionary Church. with the missionary element, as the law of its well being. So that the missionary fire, the spirit of aggression, is the life blood, and vital energy of the church.

While the Church continued missionary in her movements, she flourished like the palm tree, and grew like the cedars of Lebanon. She marched onward to the conquest of the world. Heathen temples were demolished, and idol gods were thrown down, dishonored, in the dust. Although persecution raged,

and storms of fury burst upon her, she triumphantly outrode the storms, and far and wide she spread the savor of a Savior's name. Illuminating the moral darkness of the world with the outbeamings of divine light, for "out of Zion the perfection of beauty, God hath shined."

But alas for the Church! alas for the world! the missionary fire died out. The light of the Church waned away, until the light that was in her became darkness; and O, how great was that darkness, how dreary, the long night of superstition, and error, that cursed the world.

Once more, however, the missionary spirit revived. A Luther imbibed it, from a chained Bible, "but the word of God was not bound." A Melancthon, a Calvin, a Zwingle, a Knox, a Wesley, a Whitefield, and a host of others, caught the missionary spirit, and ran to and fro, and the knowledge of the Lord increased. "The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it." You will always find, that the prosperity of God's work in our own souls; the prosperity of God's work, in any branch of the Church, or in the general Church, will be indicated by a corresponding effort, for the salvation of mankind. Missionary effort is a good thermometer by which to measure how high the flame of piety rises in the Church, or in individuals. So that for our own spiritual interests, and for the prosperity of our beloved Zion, the missionary flame, like the fire on the Jewish altar, should never die out. The Lord kindle it anew in our souls to-day.

II. LET US NOW CONTEMPLATE, THE REMEDY WHICH GOD HAS DEVISED, TO RECTIFY THE MORAL DISORDERS OF THE WORLD, NAMELY: THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL.

The Divine being, in order to accomplish his purposes, frequently makes choice of agencies, that, to human reason, appears very unlikely, to effect the object contemplated. When our Savior opened the eyes of a blind man, he spat on the ground, and out of the earth, made clay, and annointed the eyes of the man, and he, thereupon, received his sight. As contrary to human reason as a remedy for blindness as clay is,

the preaching of the Gospel as a remedy for the moral disorders of the world, is perhaps equally so. For, while the preaching of the Gospel was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, blessed be God, to them that believe, it is Christ, the wisdom and power of God unto salvation. The whole plan is simple yet efficatious, and is thus stated by St. Paul: "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed; and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard; and how shall they hear without a preacher; and how shall they preach except they be sent? So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

1. But what is the Gospel? It is emphatically good news—the best intelligence that ever fell upon the ear of man. Our Anglo Saxon word, Gospel, was originally written Godsspell—The divine charm; that Heavenly influence that God throws around the sinner to win his or her wayward spirit back to the Cross of Christ.

If we could fully realize the condition of mankind without the Gospel, we would then see and feel that it is indeed glad tidings of great joy. See that benighted heathen, oppressed with a consciousness of guilt, vainly seeking relief in self inflicted torture; shedding his own blood to appease the wrath of God, but shedding that blood in vain. Under a consciousness of his condition as a sinner, hear him as he approaches the smoking altar, in the bitterness of his soul inquire, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God. Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression? the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" But to this inquiry there comes no response of mercy. There is no minister of Christ standing by that altar, with the everlasting Gospel in his hand, and the love of Jesus in his heart, to point him to the Crucified, where the weary may find rest, and the heavy laden be released of their burdens of sin, and the agitated mind and

troubled heart be calmed by the peace of God, that passeth understanding. No, all is dark and dreary. To this poor, struggling soul, how cheering would be the Savior's invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" it would bind up his broken heart, and make his spirit glad.

2. We will present one more view of the Gospel as glad tidings, before we leave this part of our subject: The comfort it gives under the bereaving dispensations of Providence. Not only has sin an existence in this world, but death has also entered it. "Death by sin, so that death has passed upon all, for all have sinned." To social beings constituted as we are, what can be more afflicting than to witness the expiring struggles of those we love. To see the eye become dim and glassy, and the face ghastly and pale in death, is under any circumstances the greatest calamity that can afflict the human race, except the loss of the soul. But without the Gospel, is it not aggravated almost beyond endurance When death invaded your family circle, what would you have done without the consolations of the Gospel. When the parents who watched over you in the helpless hours of infancy, passed down into the valley of the shadow of death; when the wife of your bosom faded away under the power of disease, until cold in death you laid her away beneath the clods of earth; when the husband of your choice was stricken down in the noon of life, and left you alone to toil in all the woes of widowhood; when that little prattler upon whose fair brow you so often imprinted the kiss of paternal affection, wilted like a rosebud, plucked from its parent stem, and the gloomy grave, closed its mouth on all that seemed worth living for. Where, O, where, in that hour of bitterness could you go for relief?

As you stood by the graves of your loved ones, now sleeping in death, you turned to philosophy, and with an aching heart inquired, "Is it well with the child? Is it well with the lost but loved ones of my heart?" But no kind response of "It is well," was heard in reply. Philosophy grew dumb at the question. Her

lips were sealed in silence, as mournfully she turned away and left you alone in your sorrow. You then turned to infidelity, and at the boasted shrine of reason asked the startling question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" But infidelity answered no, death is an eternal sleep. Loved ones once lost are lost forever. Overwhelmed with grief, and fainting beneath an accumulation of sorrow, you were about sinking in despair, when a being as lovely as an angel of light, with "grace in her step and heaven in her eye," came to you, and while supporting you with one hand, and wiping away your tears with the other, she whispered in your ear in sweeter tones than angels use, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." For of him it is written, "O, death, I will be thy plagues; O, grave, I will be thy destruction." Then, taking you by the hand, she led you through the vale of humility, up the mountain side, until above the mists of philosophy, and the fogs of infidelity, she placed you on Pisgah's top, and revealed to you, in all its beauty, the land that is afar off, where

"Sickness and sorrow, pain and death
Are felt and feared no more,"

for life and immortality are brought to light through the Gospel of the Son of God.

III. UPON WHOM RESTS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVREY CREATION?

To this query I answer, Upon the Church, upon her ministers, and upon her members.

1. In the first place, her ministers are responsible. That professed minister of Christ, who sits in his study from week to week, from year to year, in whatever he may be engaged, whether in literature or theology, and makes no personal effort to extend the kingdom of Christ, by bringing under the influence of the gospel all within his reach, may be a *man*-made minister; but he has either never been called of God to assume the responsibilities of the office into which he has thrust himself, or he is shamefully recreant to the duties of his holy calling. The idea of merely holding the ground, and keeping the members committed to

us on our fields of labor, never entered the Savior's mind, when he gave the great commission to his Church.

Not only are the most conspicuous, and honorable places to be entered, but every part of the vast field is to be occupied, whether at home or abroad. The minister of Christ is to feel that the world is his parish, and that to every place where human beings are found, there he is called by God, and by his sacred office to go. We are not to suppose, however, that in order to accomplish the design of the great law giver, that ministers are to dissolve ecclesiastical connection, and each one for himself roam from place to place. This would defeat the very object for which the Savior gave the great commission—the universal diffusion of Christianity. For while in this way they would often cross each others paths, and the Gospel would be preached only in the prominent places, and multitudes in the remote and unimportant places, would fail to hear the Word of Life.

The Gospel is not only to be preached "in all the world," but "to every creature." In order to accomplish this, a thorough system is necessary. Appointment must be joined to appointment, until every child of man is brought under the influence of the gospel. And here let me say, that to my mind, no plan appears so scriptural, and so well adapted to effect this purpose, as our beloved Methodism. Plant down appointment contiguous to appointment. Let circuit join circuit, and conference touch conference, until, not only our own country, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, is covered, and every inhabitant of our continent has heard the joyful sound; but until Europe, and Asia, and Africa, and the Isles of the sea become a vast network of the efficient machinery of Methodism.

2. The laity also are responsible for the preaching of the Gospel.

But says one, "I cannot preach." Yes, but you can. There is not a man, or a woman, or a child who has crossed the line of moral accountability, but who, in some way, can preach the gospel. For, "out of the

mouths of babes and sucklings" God has ordained strength, that he might still the enemy and the avenger. There are none who cannot turn missionaries and hunt up the ignorant and vicious, who abound in our cities and country places, and bring them to the house of God; or as was first done by woman, tell of a risen Savior, or carry to the outcasts messages of mercy, in the shape of religious tracts.

"But," continues the objector, "this would only reach those at home. I cannot go to heathen lands, and if I could go, I could not preach to them." You cannot go, it is true, and if you could perhaps you could accomplish more by staying where you are, if God has not called you specially to this work. Still, you can preach to the heathen. In passing along one of your streets, I saw a newly erected house. I asked who built that house. The answer was Mr. —— built it. Did he cut these stones? Did he make and lay those bricks? Did he plane those boards and put them in their appropriate places? No, indeed, he did not do one of those things. And yet he built that house. His money paid the men who dressed the stones. His money paid the men who made and laid the bricks. His money paid the men who planed the boards, and put them in their places; and in this way he erected his house. In this manner you may preach the gospel to the heathen. Your money can pay for the support of the men whom God has called to this work—whose souls burn with intense desire for the salvation of men. Men who have said, "here am I, send me," who count not their lives dear unto themselves, but are willing to endure the hardships, and make the sacrifices necessary, in order to spread the savor of a Savior's name. O, what a blessed thought it is, that while we are toiling in our counting houses, in our workshops, on our farms, or at our other employments, we may become workers together with God! That by the bestowment of our money, we may preach Jesus and the resurrection to those who had never heard a Savior's name. What a glorious privilege it would be for one, or two, or more of you to join your means together and send out a missionary, to preach

for you to the heathen. Could you not do it? If so, will not God hold you responsible for not doing all you can? Recollect that "where much is given there will also much be required." The responsibility, therefore, to extend the blessings of the Gospel to the ends of the earth, rests on us as ministers, and on you as members of the church. Nor need we say that we cannot preach, nor ask the question, "Am I my brother's keeper." God will make inquisition for blood, and woe be to us if it be required at our hand! "Deliver us from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of our salvation, and our tongues shall sing aloud of thy praise."

IV. LET US NOW LOOK AT THE PROSPECT THAT OPENS UP BEFORE THE CHURCH, IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HER MISSION.

It is said that the only safe way to judge the future, is by the past. If this were true, how dark and dreary would be the prospect of the church, and of the world for the future. But I cannot believe that eighteen hundred years more, nor half of that time will pass away, before the milennial glory will break in upon the world. A prophet once asked the question, "Watchman, what of the night?" The answer was, "The morning cometh and also the night." The morning did come. The light of Christianity arose and blessed the world, and its rays scattered the darkness of sin. But alas! the night came also, with its fearful darkness. The long, dreary night of the dark ages set in, when the profession of Christianity was but a mockery, and religion but a name. When vice stalked abroad, and sin abounded, and imposture triumphed, and everything that was lovely and of good report seemed well nigh banished from the world. But, thank God, a brighter day has dawned upon the world again. A day of Gospel effulgence, which will not be followed by a night of sin. The winter is over and gone, and the springtide of glory has set in. The Church is arraying herself in the beautiful garments of salvation, and preparing to go forth, "as clear as the sun, as fair as the moon, and as terrible as an army with banners."

The prophets, while looking through the vista of

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the future, have swept their fingers over the harp of prophecy, and have awakened its melody in strains the most exalted and sublime, to portray the rising glory, the extensive spread, and conquering, but peaceful, influences of Messiah's kingdom. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up the sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; and their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cocatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Blessed day! May the Lord hasten the happy time!

While contemplating these soul inspiring predictions, we may sing,

"Ye visions bright of heavenly birth,
Ye glories of a latter day;
Descend upon the fallen earth,
And chase the shades of night away;
Bid streams of love and mercy flow,
Through every vale of human woe;
Till sin and care and sorrow cease,
And all the world is hushed in peace.

"How long amidst this dying race,
Shall desolation hold her reign;
How long shall men despise the grace,
And love of him who once was slain;
How long shall heathen bow the knee,
To gods who neither hear nor see;
Ye scenes of bliss so long foretold,
When will your radiant hues unfold.

"The gospel of the living God,
Shall echo this wide world around;
Till every place of man's abode,
Shall know the joy inspiring sound;
Who can the heavenly scene portray,
Who can describe the glorious day;
We see its glimmering from afar.
We hail the bright, the morning star."

Thank God, the day dawns; the morning star has already risen upon the world.

V. HAVING GLANCED AT THE FUTURE BY THE LIGHT OF PHROPHECY, LET US NOW LOOK AT THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

We stand on the threshold of milennial glory. Everywhere the fields are whitening for the harvest. The various John Baptists are going forth, preparing the way of the Lord. The way has opened up to the millions of China. Japan has opened her doors for the reception of the Gospel. India has heard the joyful sound. Popery, that man of sin, who has dared to plant his cloven foot upon the Bible and interdict the word of God, will soon struggle convulsively in the arms of death, slain by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The light of the Crescent is waning, and will soon give place to the heavenly rays of the Son of Righteousness. Ethiopia has already stretched forth her hands unto God. The isles of the sea are waiting for his law. The flag of a pure Christianity waves over the tombs of the prophets. All spurious forms of Chistianity will soon be purified, or destroyed. The sun-scorched Arab, charmed by the story of the Cross, will give his wanderings over. With

the fulness of the Gentiles, the outcast Jew will be brought in. The last wanderer from God will be gathered to the Cross, and every knee will bow, and every tongue confess to God. The praise of a redeeming and pardoning Savior will dwell on every lip; will be wafted on every breeze; will float up every valley, and roll over every hill and mountain, until a gust of praise ascends to heaven and mingles with the songs of angels, and the shouts of the blood-washed throngs; and earth and heaven join in one universal shout, "Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!" May our eyes see that glorious day, and our hearts feel its heavenly bliss. Amen, and Amen.

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. Samuel Steele, D.D., is among the best known of all the members of the West Virginia Conference. Though in the prime of life, he has been a long time on the walls of Zion. From a recent letter, responsive to some of my inquiries as to dates and facts, I select a few paragraphs, in the Doctor's own language, because they cover the desired points most fully, and are written in his free and easy style. He says: "I was born in the city of Londonderry, in the province of Ulster, Ireland. My parents were members of the Established Church, and under the teachings of that Church I was trained. My sisters were the first of our family to become Wesleyan Methodists, and many of the older Methodist ministers visited at our home. Yet this did not have any visible effect upon me in leading me to Methodism. Whilst admitting the goodness and faithfulness of these men of God, I preferred the ministrations of the Establishment and attended them regularly, and was confirmed by Bishop Mant, the Bishop of Down Conner and Dromore.

"In the year 1839, I was led to hear the Rev. James Lynch, a missionary who was with Dr. Coke when he died at sea on his way to India. The text he chose was, 'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear.' It was a word in season and was driven home to my heart by the Holy Spirit. I felt myself to be a sinner, and from that time I prayed more, and read more in my Bible. I continued thus to live for upwards of six months. Strange to say I avoided the Methodists, and did not go near them, until I found that the burden of my sins were too great to be borne any longer. I went to class meeting and gave my name to Mr. Lynch as a member of the society, and on the 16th of February, 1840, was savingly converted to God at a "Mourner's Bench," in the town of Newry, County Down, Ireland. The Lord blessed me powerfully. I was soon called upon to exercise my gifts in prayer and exhortation, but shrank from the work of the ministry, although convinced of my 'call.' I struggled against this call for many years, until I, in a great measure, lost my enjoyment of religion. I asked God to release me from this responsibility, but there was a deepening of the impression.

"In the year 1848, on the 12th of May, I sailed from Dublin and landed in New York the 27th of June. I reached West Virginia on the 4th of July, and shortly after handed my credentials to Dr. Gideon Martin.

"I taught school for two winters, and enjoyed it very well; but the impression was still on my mind that I must preach the gospel. My test for a call was that some minister must speak to me about the matter. One day I met Dr. Martin, and he asked me if I felt it was my duty to preach. I then told him of my convictions, &c. I was licensed to preach at Gilboa, Marion county, and shortly after commenced my itinerancy on Beverley Circuit. Rev. G. J. Nixon was preacher in charge, and Rev. S. G. J. Worthington my Presiding Elder. The next year, 1851, I went to Weston Circuit; the year following to Wayne Circuit, with Bro. J. B. Blakeney, as my colleague. The next year I was sent to Malden, where I remained two years. Then I was stationed at Weston; and after remaining one year at Weston, I was stationed two years at Buckhannon. I next spent two years on Harrisville Circuit, and went from there to Parkersburg station, where I remained two years. My next appointment was on the Parkersburg district as Presiding Elder. After serving one year on the district, I was elected Chaplain of the Seventh West Virginia Volunteer Infantry, and continued with the regiment to the end of the late civil war. After coming home, I was employed on Mannington Circuit, and at the end of the Conference year, I was sent to Chapline Street station, Wheeling. In the year 1868, I was appointed by Bishop Kingsley to Clarksburg District, as Presiding Elder, where I remained until 1872, and was next stationed at Grafton. The brethren of our Conference sent me as one of their delegates to the General Conference, which met that year in Brooklyn. We had a pleasant session of Conference and everything passed off pleasantly. After serving two years in Grafton I was appointed Presiding Elder of the Morgantown district. From Morgantown I went to Wheeling, where I was stationed at North Street, among as loving a people as I ever served—the most generous in their gifts, and in attachment to the Church unsurpassed. I am now, 1882, in Huntington, doing my best to sustain Methodism, and having obtained help of God I continue unto this day."

Dr. Steele is an earnest, able and devoted minister of the Word. He is genial in his nature, commanding in his appearance, and draws close to him those with whom he associates. He possesses considerable culture, and is especially well versed in the Scriptures. In the year 1876, he received the honorary degree of Doctor in Divinity, from Mount Union College, Alliance, Ohio,—an honor worthily bestowed. Bro. Steele's works will live after he has gone from among us; and how gratifying it is to know that—

> Good deeds in this world done,
> Are paid beyond the sun;
> As water on the root
> Is seen above in fruit."

SERMON III.

BY

REV. SAMUEL STEELE, D. D.

THEME:—CHRIST, THE ROCK.

TEXT:—And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.—MATT. XVI: 18, 19.

There is no portion of God's word, around which so much controversy has been carried on, as the words of our text. Romanists claim that in these verses are contained the following dogmas of their church: 1. That Peter is the rock upon which the church of our text is built. 2. That to Peter as chief pastor, ruler and governor of the church, was given, exclusively, all fullness of ecclesiastical power signified by the gift of the keys; and 3. That these prerogatives, including personal infallibility, descend to the Bishop of Rome, as heir and successor of Peter, first Pope of Rome, and therefore Supreme Vicar of Christ, and head of the church on earth. In support of these startling assumptions, for such we must call them, they also refer to Luke xxii: 31, 32, and to John xxi: 15, 17. These are the only Scriptures referred to by Pius IX, on the 18th of July, 1870, to sustain his claim to personal infallibility, and the supreme power of mastery over the Roman church. It is claimed that in Luke xxii: 31, 32, Peter was made infallible, and charged with guiding the faith of the

other Apostles; and in John xxi, 15, 17, that jurisdiction was given him over the Apostles, and the whole church.

It is my purpose to show, that these claims are not contained in these texts, and also that they are unscriptural and unreasonable. Some Protestant writers allow that Peter is the rock specified in my text, and call him the rock man, &c., thereby giving great joy and gladness to Roman controversialists. They further say, that no attention ought to be paid to the difference of gender, in the nouns *Petros* and *Petra*. They both mean rock, and so does Cephas in John I, 42, although King James' translators say it means "stone." In those days, however, men knew but little Latin and less Greek, so that these persons adopt nearly the Romanist view, "Thou art St. Peter, and upon this St. Peter I will build my church." But these good brethren, towards the winding up of their expositions, ask "What has this to say to Rome?" And then leave the Romanists without a plank to stand on. The contention between the Romanists and us, is, whether, the rock in the text, refers to Peter, or Christ. What is the rock? Peter, or the truth he confessed, or Christ himself? Taking all the facts into consideration, we are forced by the teaching of God's word to the latter view. For Christ, not Peter, is the rock in First Cor. x, 4, and the foundation in First Cor. iii, 11. The Old Testament associates the idea of the rock with the steadfastness and greatness of God, not with that of a man.* "He is the rock; his work is perfect; of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful; the God of Israel said the the rock of Israel spake to me."† The application of this title, "the rock," to Peter is inconsistent with the plain reference by our Lord to the preceding context in the beginning of this verse. For the words "And I say also unto thee," manifestly point out, both by the copulative "and," and the connective adverb "also," the inseparable connection of this verse with the previous declaration of Peter, concerning our

*Deut. xxii: 14, 18. †2 Sam'l. xxii, 3; Psalms, xviii, 2, 31, 36; Isa. xvii, 18; Plumptre on Matt.

Lord's divinity. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and thereby demonstrates that our Lord's immediate reply, "And I also say unto thee," &c., necessarily included the declaration of Peter, as being the principal object of the sentence, the true foundation, or rock, upon which the church alone can be properly built. Because faith in Christ, that he is the Son of the living God, is the only foundation or rock of our salvation. Bearing in mind that, according to the second novel article in Pope Pius' Creed, Romanists are bound "never to receive or interpret the sacred Scriptures, otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers." On this principle, our text gives the Romanists no support whatever, for some of the Fathers make the rock to be Peter, others the faith professed by Peter, others, Christ himself.

But suppose our text establishes what is claimed for Peter, what has it to do with Rome? "It is little more than a guess," says Littledale, "that Peter was ever at Rome at all. It is only a guess, that he was ever Bishop of Rome, and for this there is little evidence of any kind. It is only a guess, that he had the power to appoint any heir to his special privilege, whatever that was; it is only a guess, that he did so appoint the Bishops of Rome, and for these two guesses, not the smallest scrap of history or tittle of evidence ever has been produced." Nor can an argument be drawn to support these pretensions from the mention of Peter's name, first in the list of the Apostles given in Matt. x, 2; Mark iii, 16, and Luke vi, 13, for Andrew is mentioned before Peter in John i. 44, and in the divisions of the Corinthian church no prominence is given to Peter, or Cephas, over other Apostles. He is classed with Paul, and Appollos James is mentioned first in Gal. ii, 9. And in the same chapter, Paul withstood Peter to the face, and reproved him for not walking uprightly, and that before them all. Now, I would like to see a Primate, Bishop, or Cardinal of the church of Rome, reproving the Pope to his face. It would be amusing to a looker-on, provided he was at a safe distance from the dungeons of

the Inquisition. Peter is called to account by the church at Jerusalem, for preaching to, and associating with, the Gentiles. Peter and John were sent by the Apostles at Jerusalem to Samaria.* Now, who has ever heard of the Cardinals at Rome sending the Pope on a mission? But here the Apostles send, and Peter is sent. Our Savior said, "He that is sent is not greater than he that sent him."† Certainly these claims of the Roman church are not sustained here, nor does Peter, in his Epistles, claim any supremacy over the church, merely stating that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ, and exhorts "the elders as an elder," and not as the infallible Vicar of Christ. If Peter had been appointed by our Lord, Prince of the Apostles, Vicar of Christ, with jurisdiction over the whole church, and that these should descend, to the Bishop of Rome, is it consistent with the goodness and wisdom of God, that he should not have mentioned it in express words, especially when the knowledge of it, according to the teachings of Rome, is so essential to the very being of the Church and the salvation of the soul?

Pope Pius IX, declared the strength and solidity of the church, consists in the institution, the perpetuity and the nature of the sacred Apostolic Primacy. Observe, the strength and solidity of the Church of Rome, is not placed, by this authoritative statement, in Jesus Christ, nor in the Holy Spirit, nor in the spirituality or holiness of the church, but in the primacy of Peter. Paul surely must have been guilty of a very great omission, when, in enumerating the several officers of the Christian Church, he did not mention the chief, but merely says that the "Lord gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists and some pastors and teachers;"‡ and more expressly in First Corinthians, xii, 28: "God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers," &c. Now, if the Popes of Rome were heads of the church, and heirs to the so-called privileges of Peter, would not Paul have said, first, Popes; secondarily,

*Acts viii, 14. †John xiii, 16. ‡Ephesians iv, 11.

Apostles, &c.? But Paul knew of no such an officer. He knew of no head of the church, but his risen Lord, who still walks among the golden candlesticks.

I must confess that I cannot find much of this rock stability in Peter. His testimony on this occasion, as to the divinity and sonship of Christ, was revealed unto him by God. It was not of himself. Besides, he vacillated, when Paul withstood him to the face, and he denied his Lord three times. And to conclude under this topic, the teachings of our Lord are entirely opposed to such assumptions, instituting equality among his Apostles, prohibiting them to assume, or admit, a superiority of power one above another.

There was a strife among the twelve at the last supper, which of them should be accounted the greatest. Did our Lord say then to quell this strife, I have already appointed Peter to that position? No. "The Kings," said he of the Gentiles, "Exercise Lordship over them; and they that exercise authority over them are called benefactors, but ye shall not be so," &c.* The Master saith, "But be ye not called Rabbi, for there is one master (one guide or governor) of you, even Christ, but ye are brethren."† As to Luke xx, 31, 32, these words at the last supper were spoken in view of Peter's coming apostacy, warning him that he should fall below the other Apostles, and the words of John, xxi, 15–17, were spoken to reinstate him in that apostolic office from which he had been degraded by his denial of Christ.

The Scriptures produced for the present infallibility of their church, relate to the time of the Apostles, and to the Apostles themselves. For instance, these promises, "The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name he shall teach you all things."‡ It is very plain that these promises are limited to the Apostles, and those Disciples, who personally conversed with the Savior, to whom he had spoken, and to whose remembrance the Holy Ghost was to bring those things he had before told them. It

*Luke xxii, 14-26. Matthew xx, 25, 26, 27. †Mathew xxiii, 8. ‡John xiv: 26. Also xvi: 11-13.

is true, Christ has promised to be with his Church always, even to the end of the world.* But if all those with whom Christ is present, are infallible, then every sincere Christian in the world is infallible, and then what will become of the Pope's prerogative, when the most ignorant man, provided he is a Christian, will be as infallible a guide as the Pope is.

And to as little purpose for their argument is the other promise of our Savior, "where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them,"† For if Christ's being in the midst of them makes them infallible it is also certain that if but two or three only shall meet together in his name, in Wheeling, they will then be thus met together infallible. In the words of an old writer, "If infallibility be had at home, and at so cheap a rate, great fools are they who will put themselves to the trouble and expense of a journey to Rome for it."

The Church spoken of in our text, is the Church of Christ. "I will build my Church," he the foundation and chief corner stone, will see to it that none but living stones are built upon himself, the rock of ages. The church which he builds is called his body. Not any one visible church, but "the Church which is Christ's Body, and of which he is the head, standeth only of living stones and true Christians, not only outwardly in name and title, but inwardly, in heart and truth."‡ Bishop Jeremy Taylor writes in his "Dissuasive from Popery, 1660." "If any will agree to call the universality of professors by the title of the Church, they may if they will. Any word, by consent, may signify anything. But if by a Church we mean that society which is really joined to Christ, which hath received the Holy Ghost, which is heir of the promises and of the good things of God, which is the body of which Christ is the Head, then the invisible part of the visible Church, that is, the true servants of Christ only, are the Church." Again he writes, "Now besides the evidence of the thing itself and the notice of it in Scripture, let me observe that this very thing is in itself a part of the Article of Faith. For

*Matthew xxviii:20. †Matthew xviii:20. ‡Bishop Ridley, martyr, 1556.

if it be asked what is the Catholic Church ? The Apostle's creed defines it: it is *communio sanctorum.* 'I believe the Holy Catholic Church,' that is, 'The Communion of Saints,' the conjunction of all them who heartily serve God through Jesus Christ. The one is exegetical of the other."

In the Irish Articles drawn up by the learned Archbishop Usher, in 1615, the Church is described as follows: "There is but one Catholic Church (out of which there is no salvation,) containing the universal company of all the Saints that ever were, are, or shall be, gathered together in one body, under one head, Christ Jesus, part whereof is already *triumphant*, part as yet *militant* here upon earth." Barron, in his discourse concerning the unity of the Church, defines the *visible church* to be "the society of those who at present, or in the course of time, profess the faith and Gospel of Christ, in distinction to all other religions." He says of the mystical body of Christ,—"To the Catholic Society of true believers, and faithful servants of Christ, called the *Church mystical and invisible*, diffused through all ages, dispersed through all countries, whereof part doth sojourn on earth, part doth reside in Heaven, part is not yet extant, to this especially all the glorious titles and excellent privileges attributed to the Church in Scripture do agree. This is the Body of Christ, the Spouse of Christ, &c."

Mr. Watson's view is much the same as that already given. He says: "The Church of Christ, in its largest sense, consists of all who have been baptized in the name of Christ. In a stricter sense, it consists of those who are vitally united to Christ, as the members of the body to the head, and who being thus imbued with spiritual life, walk no longer after the flesh, but after the spirit." He adds, "taken in either view, it is a visible society." He differs from most of the reformers in this view, as may be seen in the definitions of the divines of the English Church. They held that the whole visible church, as well as each particular church of which it is made up, may be considered under two aspects: First, In its widest amplitude, as a *mixed* society, embracing all baptized persons who

profess the faith of Christ, and, so, are in external communion with him; and, secondly, in a more restricted sense, special reference being had to the portion of it which already corresponds to, and fulfills, the *true and essential idea* of the Church of God. There are not two Churches, the one visible, the other invisible, but one and the same Church, regarded under two different points of view, *internally* as respects its fundamental properties and nature; *externally*, in reference to its outer framework and actual circumstances. This distinction is not happily expressed by the epithets "visible" and "invisible." For they suggest as Romanists have not failed to observe, the notion of two distinct Churches, and the word "invisible" seems to imply that the members of Christ's Mystical Body are in no respect within the sphere of human sense. But without contending for the propriety of the term "invisible," as applied to the Church, the distinction to which it points is a real one, and is virtually admitted by the Romanists themselves.*

According to the Romish theory of the Church, the supremacy by Divine right of the Roman Pontiff, constitutes the principle of organic union, which combines into one, the whole visible Church. The proof of this divinely instituted supremacy of the Pope, which was given by Bellarmine, and the older champions of Rome, was based partly on texts of Scripture, partly on *a priori* arguments, and partly on the testimony of early Christian antiquity. This agreement has been met, refuted and triumphantly demolished by Barron and others. And the more recent school of Romish theologians, have virtually admitted the unsatisfactory nature of the old argument. Möhler, in his very able work on the subject, omits all appeal to Scripture and tradition, and abandons the attempt to derive from the institution of Christ, or his apostles anything beyond the simple episcopate. From the latter, he derives the Papacy, by a process of natural development—Bishops, Metropolitans, Patriarchs, the Pope. "They," he says, "who require incontrovertible historical proofs of the existence of a primacy be-

*See Bellarmine Barron and Mohler.

fore that period, when men became fully conscious of the unity of the Church, require what is unreasonable, because impossible according to the law of a true development."*

And again: "It is evident that during the first three centuries and even up to the close of them, the primacy does not begin to raise itself above the first rudimentary traces, that its movements are destitute of any form."†

To the same effect Cardinal, then Dr. Manning wrote:‡ "St. Ignatius is silent in his epistles on the subject of the Pope's authority, that authority was not, and could not be in active operation then. * * * In course of time, first the power of the bishop displayed itself, and then the power of the Pope." "A Pope would not arise but in proportion as the Church was consolidated." Hence it appears from the admission of learned Romanists themselves, that the Papal supremacy—the very foundation, as well as the keystone of the Romish theory of the Church—so far from implying a supernatural origin, was the result of purely *natural* causes.§

But we must hasten to a close. Suffice it to say that the keys given to Peter, are explained by the very opposite and obviously explanatory fact, that this Apostle was the first preacher of the Gospel Dispensation in its perfected form, both to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost, and afterward to the Gentiles. "Whatsoever ye shall bind, &c."—In Matt. xviii:18, the same binding and losing power is given to all the Apostles. These expressions manifestly refer to the authortative declaration of anything to be *obligatory*, and its infraction to be sinful, and, therefore, subject to punishment, or the contrary. This power was connected with the plenary inspiration of the Apostles, and beyond these inspired men, it could not extend."‖

We have now come to the end of our discourse. We think that we have proved that Peter received no primacy of jurisdiction, &c., in these words of our

* Sect. 68, Cyprians Age. † Sect. 70, Einhert in der Kirche. Essay on Development, p. 165. ‡ on De ? See Butcher on Reunion with Rome. ‖ See Watson's Inst., II vol. 602, 603.

blessed Lord; that he is not the Rock of our text, and that the claims of the Pope of Rome to be the head of the Church, and infallible, are without any foundation whatever, in God's Word, or in the teachings of the Apostolic Church.

PERSONAL SKETCH.

The subject of this sketch, the Rev. Benjamin Ison, was born November 12, 1824, in the village of New Dale, Shropshire, England—four miles from Madely, the home of the sainted Fletcher. When about sixteen years of age, he joined the Wesleyan Methodist society; and two years thereafter, he was licensed to preach. When twenty years of age, and after he had preached two years in his native land, he bade farewell to home and friends, and came to the New World—America. Immediately after his arrival in this country, October 17, 1844, he united with the Liberty Street M. E. Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Rev. G. S. Holmes, being the pastor.

In July, 1845, he was received, on probation, into the Pittsburgh Conference, and was sent to Weston circuit, Lewis county, West Virginia, which was then a part of the Pittsburgh Conference. Rev. F. S. DeHass—now F. S. DeHass, D.D., of Brooklyn—was the preacher in charge, and Bro. Ison was his colleague as junior preacher. On this circuit, as in fact in all his fields of labor amid the hills of this Switzerland of America, he was quite successful in awakening a religious sentiment among the people, and pointing them to another and a better life.

Brother Ison, in the course of his ministry among our peaple, traveled the following circuits, viz: Weston, Beverly, Lumberport, Pruntytown, Selbyport, Morgantown, Palatine, West Milford and Oakland. Morgantown and Pruntytown, he traveled twice. He has also filled the following stations, viz: Morgantown, Moundsville, North Street—Wheeling—and Parkersburg. Some years ago he was Presiding Elder of the Parkersburg district, and is now serving his fourth year in the same office, on the Oakland district, part of which lies in the State of Maryland.

May 28, 1850, Bro. Ison was united in marriage with Ellen Elizabeth Robinson, near Pruntytown, Taylor county, this State. Miss Robinson was the daughter of Joshua Robinson, Esq., and sister of Col. Robinson, who is at this time one of the Regents of the West Virginia University. Six children were the result of their union—five sons and one daughter. Three only are now living—two sons and the daughter. One of the sons, William, a graduate of the West Virginia University, a thorough scholar and a conscientious Christian gentleman, is professor in a military school in Port Chester, New York. The other son is employed in the Government printing office at Washington, D. C. All of the children, like their parents before them, are communicants in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Bro. Ison is highly esteemed by his brethren in the ministry, as a man of both ability and worth. He preaches with power and acceptability. His language is choice, and his sermons are always well prepared.

He has not yet been honored with an election as delegate to the General Conference, but, in 1872, he was elected first reserve delegate by an almost unanimous vote. He is yet in the midst of his usefulness, and is daily rendering earnest and efficient service in the Master's work.

SERMON IV.

BY

REV. BENJAMIN ISON, P.E.

THEME:—THE BETTER COUNTRY.

TEXT:—"But now they desire a better country."—HEBREWS xi: 16.

From time immemorial, there has been a disposition among men to travel for the purposes of discovery, adventure, sight-seeing, recreation, speculation, and settlement. To this Western World, Columbus and others turned their attention and their steps.

> "To this fair land the Pilgrims trod—
> This land we fondly call our own."

The former came on voyages of discovery, the latter, in quest of religious liberty—"Freedom to worship God." Multitudes are now coming to our shores from lands beyond the seas; and here they are going from one part of the country to another, but mostly to some part of the great West. "Westward the star of empire takes its way." If you ask these persons why they are traveling, they will tell you "They desire a better country"—a country where they will have better facilities for improving their temporal condition, and perhaps enjoy greater religious privileges. Many succeed, some even get rich, while thousands acquire a home and a competence. But numbers are doomed to disappointment. Many who embark for these shores never reach them. Through rocks, and storms, and fires, and collisions, they find a watery grave; while many, who attempt to change their places of abode by going from one State to another, after traveling many

long, weary miles, undergoing many hardships, and sometimes spending their little all, return to the places from which they set out, having learned from sad experience that "It is not all gold that glitters," and that often

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view."

Christians are "strangers and pilgrims" on the earth. Having "no abiding city" here, they "seek one to come." "This is not their rest, because it is poluted." "They desire a better country, that is a heavenly." And animated and influenced by this desire to the end, they are never disappointed. This was the dying testimony of our beloved Bishop Janes. "I am not disappointed." Millions have reached "the shining shore," and millions more are on their way, to whom "an abundant entrance will be ministered unto the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." In the text, the Apostle is speaking of some of the Old Testament saints. "They desired a better country." But this is true of good men of all ages and all climes. Job said: "I would not live alway;" and Paul "desired to depart and be with Christ," which, he said, was "far better."

In pursuing this theme, for our mutual edification and encouragement, I shall consider,

I. THE OBJECT OF THE CHRISTIAN'S DESIRE—"A BETTER COUNTRY."

Our heavenly Father, knowing the dullness of our apprehension, to stimulate us in our Christian course, has given us some conception of heaven by familiar comparisons. He calls it "a house," "a kingdom," "a city," "an inheritance," "Paradise," and in the text, "a better country." It is better than was Ur, of the Chaldees, which Abraham left for the land of Canaan. It is better than was the land of Canaan itself, in its palmy days, though that was "a goodly land," a land of abundance, "a land flowing with milk and honey." It is better than this world, the Christians' present dwelling place, or any part of it. And it is as contrasted with this world that I shall speak of it. The

language of the text does not imply that this is altogether a bad world, but the contrary. Although sin has greatly deranged and injured it, yet still there is much of beauty, much of loveliness, much of happiness in it. But heaven is a better country, superlatively better, infinitely better. It is so,

1. With respect to the character of its inhabitants. It has been truthfully said that it is the people that make a country. Hence we would rather live in uncongenial climes, where civilization reigns, than in regions more favored by nature, but where ignorance and its concomitants abound. In this life, there is a mixture of good and evil. The tares and the wheat grow together. The godly and the ungodly associate. They sit together in church, they belong to the same family and eat at the same table. They mingle at the social party, and meet for the transaction of business. And often are the souls of the righteous "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." They behold the transgressors and are grieved. But in that better land, "The wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." In the language of the prophet Isaiah, the people are "all righteous." In the great multitude that John saw before the throne, there was not one ungodly person, not one hypocrite or unbeliever. The society there is composed of the pure and good of all ages and all countries, "who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;" of holy angels who never knew sin; and of the Triune God who is "glorious in holiness."

Heaven is the region of sinless perfection. "No sin in heaven is found." "No shadow of evil is there" There is no dark suspicion, no evil surmising, no cruel envy, or hatred, or jealousy, no bad passions or bad principles.

> "There love, unchanging love abounds."
>
> "There joy, like morning dew, distills,
> And all the air is love."
>
> "There friend holds fellowship with friend,"

And there is no enemy to interrupt or annoy. Happy country! Blessed people!

2. Heaven is a better country with respect to its government and laws. These, of course, have much to do with the happiness of a people. Hence many come from under the despotisms of the old world to live under our free and mild government. Everything considered, ours, is doubtless, the best government in the world. But who would dare to say that it is perfect? Imperfection pertains to everything human. If we could collect together the wisest statesmen and the purest patriots on earth, to make laws and to frame systems of government, they could not make them perfect. But the laws governing the inhabitants of the better land are absolutely perfect. Like their divine author, they are "holy, just and good." They are a transcript of the divine mind. His will is the law of his people. And "what he wills is best." He is infinitely wise and infinitely good. He loves his people and delights in their happiness, and they are happy in doing his will. "His commandments are not grievous, and in keeping of them there is great reward."

Again: A good government may not be well administered. The laws may not be justly executed. Justice may not always be done. In our own free and happy land, so-called, men with money and friends often violate the laws with impunity, while the poor man goes to the wall. "Wealth makes many friends, but the poor is separated from his neighbor." But in the better country, all are equal before the law. "God is no respecter of persons." He "rewards every man according to his works," having respect not only to the quality but also to the quantity. They that do most and suffer most for Christ and his cause, and that take most holiness to heaven will have the highest positions and the richest rewards in the heavenly world. "As one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." St. John informs us that they who had come out of great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the

blood of the Lamb, were, for this reason, "before the throne of God."

3. Heaven is a better country with respect to its climate and healthfulness. There is no excessive heat or cold, no torrid or frigid zone. "For," says St. John, "Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat;" and the absence of the opposite discomfort may reasonably be inferred. There are no scorching simoons, no chilling winds, no destructive tempests, no vitiated air, no impure water, no unwholesome food, no blighting mildew, no poisonous elements, in short, nothing to induce disease and death. The causes being absent, the effects, of course, do not exist. In that "sunbright clime" there are no burning fevers, no racking pains, no weakening consumption, no feeble and tottering old age, "no weary wasting of the frame away." There are no sick beds, no houses of mourning, no cities of the dead. For "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying." There is "life forevermore." How different it is in this world! Here, we are in constant danger. The elements war against us. We inhale disease from the atmosphere. We take it in our food and drink.

"Death rides on every passing breeze,
And lurks in every flower.
Each season has its own disease,
Its peril, every hour."

Fires, famines, floods, storms, earthquakes, diseases, epidemics, accidents on land and on sea, all combine to hurry man to his "long home," while "the mourners go about the streets." This world has been called "the land of the living," but it is also the land of the dying. There is no place in this wide, wide world, however healthful, that is exempt from disease and death. I have seen the invalid, with hectic flush and pale blue eyes and almost transparent hands, leaving home in care of friends, in search of health, by a change of air and scenery. But he has returned home disappointed, or strangers' hands have closed his eyes in death. There is but one place known to us in the vast dominions of the Almighty where disease and death enter not; that place is heaven. There only are life and immortality. There grows the tree of life,

there flows the river of life, and to these the inhabitants have constant access, and live forever—they are "forever with the Lord."

4. Heaven is a better country with respect to its scenery and prospects.

There are lovely views to be had in this world. We have the beautiful and the sublime, the romantic and the picturesque. We have grand old forests, moss covered rocks, towering mountains, lovely hills and valleys, dashing cascades, and beautiful, meandering streams. Then we have the beauties of nature and art combined. There is the palatial mansion, with its corresponding surroundings, its grassy lawn, its beautiful and fragrant flowers, its terraced slopes, its sparkling fountains, its ornamental statuary, its gaily plumaged birds—in short, everything to please the eye. But all this is only a faint emblem of the heavenly landscape. We read of "a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." On either side of the river grows the tree of life, bearing "twelve manner of fruits," "and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." There is the city whose walls are of jasper and gold, her buildings clear as crystal, her foundations, all manner of precious stones; and her gates, of pearl. The inhabitants thereof, are clothed in white robes; they wave verdant palms, and tune harps of gold. And yet "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, what the Lord hath laid up for them that love him." "We walk by faith, not by sight." Again: In this world, night periodically shuts out the beauties of creation from our sight. But "there shall be no night there."

> "All o'er those wide extended plains,
> Shines one eternal day."

Moreover, in this world, in consequeuce of the rotundity of the earth and of our imperfect sight, our views are circumscribed and limited. But there, our sight will be perfect, and our views wide, extensive, illimitable. "Shores in sunlight stretch away;" away, *ad infinitum*. Moses, the servant of God, was permitted, from the top of Pisgah, to view the land of Canaan, in

all its length and breadth, but not to enter upon it. But the Christian, at the end of life's pilgrimage, will have an abundant entrance into the heavenly Canaan, and will "view the landscape o'er." His eyes shall "see the King in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is [now] very far off."

5. Heaven is a better country with respect to its employments and pleasures. Our employments here are laborious. It is the lot of mortals to toil, either with the body or mind; and labor, either physical or mental, is "a weariness of the flesh." Even the service of God, with these dull bodies about us, often causes weariness. Our employments in heaven will, doubtless, consist, in part, of the worship of God and the study of his character and works; conversation with saints and angels; and in offices of mutual kindness and love. More than this we do not know. But these dull bodies will be left behind, and when raised again, will be spiritualized and made like the glorious body of Christ. Their powers will be vigorous and incapable of decay, and the service of our heavenly Father will give pleasure without pain and exercise, without weariness; yea, "fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore."

6. Heaven is a better country with respect to its supplies. It is a land of abundance. There is no scarcity there. No famine can ever reach it. There, poverty is unknown. There, none has ever felt, or ever will feel, the pangs of hunger or the pains of thirst. "For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." There, every want is supplied, every desire gratified. The inhabitants lack no good thing. "In our Father's house there is bread enough and to spare." "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God."

7. Heaven is a better country with respect to its duration. There is nothing certain in this uncertain world. The brightest flowers fade, the dearest friends part. Wealth makes to itself wings and flies away.

Honors and pleasures are ephemeral. The earth itself, will finally disappear.

> "The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve!
> And like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind."

"The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up" But "the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever and ever." When we read in the Scriptures of "the saints' secure abode," we usually find everlasting duration associated with it. It is "a kingdom, *that cannot be moved*;" "a house *not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*;" "an inheritance, *incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*;" "a city *which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*;" it is "*life eternal*," and *everlasting joy*. There is, therefore, freedom from all fear of falling, from all fear of suffering, and from fear of loss. There is a feeling of perfect security and, consequently, of perfect satisfaction and peace. It is no wonder, therefore, that wise and good men desire this country, and that sometimes they even "languish and sigh to be there."

Let us consider,

II. WHAT THE CHRISTIAN'S DESIRE IMPLIES.

1. It implies faith in the existence of a better country. "Desire," says Webster "is a wish to possess some gratification or source of happiness supposed to be *obtainable*." It would be absurd to desire something that is unattainable, and that has no existence. But the good and wise "desire a better country," and God, our maker, is too good to raise hopes, or excite desires, which he does not intend to gratify.

> ——"Whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
> This longing after immortality?
>
> * * * * * * * *
>
> 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
> 'Tis heaven itself that points out a hereafter,
> And intimates eternity to man."

The more enlightened heathen believed in a future life. The polished Greeks had their Elysium for the good and virtuous. And even

> "The poor Indian, whose untutored mind,
> Sees God in storms and hears him in the wind;
> His soul, proud science never taught to stray
> Far as the solar walk and milky way.
> Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
> Behind the cloud-topped hills, a humbler heaven."

But life and immortality have been brought to light by the Gospel. He, who gave evidence that he is the Son of God, said to his disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Now, as rational beings, we believe on evidence. We receive the testimony of credible witnesses. We believe there are such quarters of the globe as Asia and Africa, and such countries as Russia and Turkey, although we may never have been there; but we have read the histories and geographies of these countries, written by men who have been there, or who, by some other unmistakable way have become acquainted with them. Now, if we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. The truth of the Scriptures has been established beyond the possibility of a doubt, to the minds of thinking Christian men, and they reveal to our faith a heavenly world. To say nothing of the testimony of the patriarchs, prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself assures us of "a better country." He came from that country and returned to it again. And before returning, he said to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." An old divine remarks, "If it were not so, he could have told them, for he gave evidence that 'in him were all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' If it were not so, he would have told them, for he proved to them, and to the world, that he was a being of boundless benevolence and unwavering truth. But it was so, and, therefore, he assured them of the fact." such, then, is the evidence for our faith to rest upon,

that not to believe is unreasonable and wicked. Dr. Young says,

> "Believe, and show the reason of a man;
> Believe, and taste the pleasures of a God;
> Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb."

A sacred writer says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

2. This desire implies knowledge of that country. A man desiring to remove to some country, for the purpose of making his home there, evidently knows something of that country, which makes it desirable. It is reasonable to suppose this. The Bible is the first and principal source of our information concerning the better land. There we read of its character and attractions; its intelligent and pure society; its freedom from sin and sorrow; its uninterrupted peace; its undisturbed rest; its pure pleasure; its ceaseless songs; its endless happiness, springing from the communion of saints and angels, and the vision of God. A dying Christian once said, "I am going to heaven, and I shall be no stranger there. I have been there a thousand times by faith, and many of my friends are there; and above all, my Savior is there, whom I have known for lo, these many years."

We know there is a heavenly world by *experience*, or *the foretaste we have of it.* We "taste the good word of God, *and the powers of the world to come.*" When the spies brought of the fruits of the land of Canaan, the people knew that it was a goodly land, and a land to be desired. The fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, temperance, patience, gentleness, which are found in renewed hearts, are not indigenous to this world. They are exotics, and are impeded in their growth by unfavorable influences. But they grow to perfection in that better land.

We know there is a better world than this, *by the testimony of dying friends.* They often tell us of the sights they see, and of the sounds they hear. They have glorious visions and revelations of their heavenly home. Angels stand around their beds, and they see loved ones that have gone before. As

> "The world recedes and disappears,
> Heaven opens on their eyes; their ears
> With sounds seraphic ring."

And we then say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

3. This desire for the better country implies, efforts to reach it. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after," says the Psalmist, "that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." If a man truly and earnestly desires to go to some country in this world, which he considers better than his native land, he will take steps to gratify this desire: in other words, he will make arrangements to go, and will start on his journey. The Christian manifests his desire for the better country by his holy walk and godly deportment. He says, by his heavenly conversation, that his "kingdom is not of this world;" and they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country"—"a better country, that is, a heavenly." They "look not at the things which are seen, and are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, and are eternal." They "set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth." A good man, now in heaven, whose children had left him in England, to come to this country, said that he had a longing desire to come after them, and as soon as he could make the arrangements, he followed in their steps, and found a home with them till he went to his home above. Good men on earth, are "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

4. The Christian's desire for the better country, implies efforts to induce others to seek it. Moses said to Hobab, "We are journeying to the place of which the Lord hath said, I will give it you. Come then with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Those who are going to heaven themselves, desire others to accompany them. First, because they are social beings—they love congenial company. Good company makes the way still more pleasant. Secondly, because they are unselfish and loving. They love their neighbors, friends, acquaintances, and fellow-beings in general, as themselves. Finding the way to heaven peaceful

and pleasant, and knowing that it leads to joys immortal, they say to the wanderers from God as they pass along, "Come with us." "The Spirit *and the Bride*"—God *and the Church*—"say come."

I cannot conclude this sermon better than by giving the beautiful poem of Mrs. Hemans, on

THE BETTER LAND.

"I hear thee speak of the better land:
Thou callest its children a happy band:
Mother! O where is that radiant shore?
Shall we not seek it and weep no more?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the fire-flies dance through the myrtle boughs?
—'Not there, not there, my child!'

"Is it where the feathery palm trees rise,
And the date grows ripe under sunny skies,
Amid the green islands of glittering seas,
Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze,
And strange bright birds on their starry wings,
Bear the rich hues of all glorious things?
—'Not there, not there, my child!'

"Is it far away in some region old,
Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold,
And the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up the secret mine,
And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand?
Is it there, sweet mother, that better land?
—'Not there, not there, my child!'

"Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy:
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy;
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair:
Sorrow and death may not enter there.
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom
Far beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb,
—It is there, it is there, my child!"

Yes, my brethren, it is there.

"When the good man yields his breath
(For the good man never dies),
Bright beyond the vale of death
Lo! the land of promise lies!"

There are gathered the good, the pure, and the true, who have departed this life. Among them are some in whose company we once delighted, who lessened our pains, and enhanced our pleasures, strewing flowers of love and kindness in our pathway, and helping to make our lives cheerful and bright. Much of the sunshine left our homes and our hearts when they passed away, and we have often felt lonely without them. They will not return to us, but we may go to them. They are now within the beautiful gates, awaiting our arrival. But the best of all is, our

Saviour is there. He is the great attraction. He is the light and joy of the place. "All, all we want is there." "Then where our treasure is, let our hearts be also."

To the unconverted, let me say, Live no longer in the indulgence of "worldly lusts." Pursue no longer the pleasures of sin, but seek the joys that never fade. You are going to your "long home;" you are traveling to the grave. Will you not turn your feet to God's testimonies, and journey to the "better land?"

PERSONAL SKETCH

Rev. J. Wesley Webb, D.D., was born June 5th, 1826, on Mossy creek, Augusta county, Virginia. When the subject of this sketch was but twelve years of age, his father died, and, in consequence of which, he was thrown upon his own resources to procure an education. Availing himself, however, of the educational advantages, for which the Valley of Virginia has always been noted, Bro. Webb made rapid progress, and at the age of nineteen, became principal of the Middlebrook Academy. He remained in this position for three years, when he was chosen principal of Roller's Seminary, a position which he filled, for a considerable period, with great acceptability. His tastes, however, were not in the line of teaching, so he took up the study of medicine at Harrisonburg, Virginia, with the renowned Dr. Clay of that place.

Dr. Webb was the subject of early religious impressions, and united with the Church under the pastoral care of Rev. B. N. Brown, of the Baltimore conference. Shortly after his conversion, the call to the ministry was very plainly heard and felt; consequently he closed his medical books, and gave himself to the Master's work. In 1850, he entered the Gospel ministry, and for more than thirty years has been a herald of the Cross. Like him who wrote one of our most beautiful hymns, Bro. Webb can, no doubt, say:

"I love to tell the story;
For those who know it best,
Seem hungering and thirsting,
To hear it like the the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new, song,
'Twill be—the old, old story,
That I have loved so long."

In 1853, Dr. Webb came to West Virginia to take charge of the Buckhannon Academy (Baxter's Institute); and at the close of a very successful term, he entered the West Virginia Conference, at Fairmont, in June, 1854. Since that time he has supplied some of the best charges in the conference.

As an expression of the esteem of his brethren, he was elected on the first ballot, as a delegate to the General Conference, which met in Brooklyn in the year 1872. He made a very efficient delegate, and was elected a member of the Publishing Committee of the Pittsburgh *Christian Advocate*, for four years.

As a preacher, Dr. Webb ranks high. His sermons, though carefully written before hand, are delivered without even notes, and often with wondrous unction and eloquence. Persons who have heard him in his happiest efforts, bear testimony to the thrilling effect produced on the congregation by his earnest discourses. He has executive ability of no ordinary character, and makes a first-class Presiding Elder. While Presiding Elder of Morgantown and Guyandotte Districts, fifty churches and parsonages were built under his administration. He has been instrumental, as Pastor and Presiding Elder, in the erection of between sixty and seventy churches and parsonages.

As a recognition of his literary and theological attainments, the honorary degree of Doctor in Divinity was conferred upon him by Mount Union College some years ago. Dr. Webb still applies himself closely to reading and study, and keeps up with the times—making his sermons fresh and vigorous. At present he is stationed at Triadelphia—a suburban town of the city of Wheeling.

SERMON V.*

BY

REV. J. WESLEY WEBB, D.D.

THEME:—THE DUTY OF SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES.

TEXT:—"Search the Scriptures."—JOHN v: 39.

There exists many exalted and infallible proofs of the divine authority and unadulterated truth of the Holy Scriptures, as embodied in the Book called the Bible. And even if these proofs of their divinity were taken away, yet there remains all the marks of genuineness and truth that can be brought in support of any other ancient record, or that may be required to authenticate the circumstances of this generation two hundred years hence. Then, he, who can reject the sacred writings as spurious, may with less presumption and more reason reject any other moral truth. The text, in the original, is ambiguous, and may be translated, "Ye do search the Scriptures," or as it now stands in our rendering, "Search the Scriptures." In the remarks we shall make upon the subject, your attention will be directed,

I. LET US EXAMINE THE PROPRIETY OF THIS REQUIREMENT, AND THE REASONS WHY WE ARE REQUIRED TO "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES."

A careful investigation of these sacred records will readily convince us that all the divine claims are founded in justice and sustained by the highest reasons. We will, at the same time, be surprised at their wise and beautiful adaptation to all the circumstances

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and relations of man. The requirement in the text is made with reference to the general good that will follow, as a natural consequence, our compliance with it. Our subject, when considered in its consequence, is equivalent to a command or requirement to be wise. And who is not interested in being wise? Whose present enjoyment and future good is inseparable from this? But this text is a requirement to have the wisdom of God. And who is not interested especially in this? What a curse, what a poverty, what a misfortune is ignorance here. Man might, with a laudable ambition, pride himself in ignorance, in anything else, if it would but secure to him that wisdom which cometh down from above. But the wisdom recommended here is not to be obtained by any other means except those prescribed in the text. The same wisdom that offered the prize, has presented the means of obtaining it.

Apart from the Bible, there is no certain knowledge of salvation. Were a Chinaman or Hindoo, who had acquired some knowledge of the English language, to inquire of us where he might find the knowledge of God, we would not point him to the philosophy of the heathen, or the exercise of his reason, nor yet to the works of nature; but, as a Christian, we would direct him to the Bible as the only sure guide to, and trustworthy means of, heavenly wisdom.

The Bible, as a historical book, is of unparalleled importance to us, not only because it extends its narrative of facts beyond the date of all other records, even to the beginning of time, but because these facts, themselves, are of the greatest importance to us as constituting the basis of all our correct and pure moral notions.

Among the great facts made known to man, in that brief, but only sketch of the antediluvian world, are the existence of God, the creation of man, the introduction of sin, and the dealings of God toward the old world. These truths are of nameless value to us. They stand the great beacon of the Christian world. while all beyond its effulgence is darkness and gloom,

The existence of God demonstrated to our first parents, and from them made known to us, is certainly one of the most transcendantly momentous truths ever made known to man, and on the knowledge, as well as belief of which, hangs the eternal reality of all things and the worth of the Bible to us.

The creation of man and of the world demonstrates to us the Omnipotence of the Great Jehovah, and opens up to man the mystery and certain truth of his own origin. The introduction of sin declares in favor of God's justice—fixes the period, shows the cause of man's ruin, and reconciles the miseries of man to the holiness of God. The dealings of God toward the men of that age, show the deep corruption of the human heart—reveal the fearful displeasure of God against sin—heightens in its declarations of wisdom and mercy in his protecting the righteous, and then draws a glowing picture of the just destruction of the wicked, and in the plain language of Scripture precedent, fixes our minds on a day of final and fearful retribution.

What supremely important facts are these? Facts answering the most highly aspiring questions of an immortal enquirer—richly rewarding with their undying information the labors of the most diligent searcher after truth, as the precious metals of the earth repay the toils of the faithful miner. Information that distinguishes us from the heathen around us, and elevates us above them. But where may those ancient and happy truths be found? To what source shall we attribute their origin, and to what instrumentality shall we attribute their uncorrupted preservation to us? In vain may we search through the productions of heathen philosophers, sages, poets, and even historians. None of them claim the authority we require, nor record the facts for which we search. Nor will it avail us to employ our reason, and inquire of the various resources of nature around us. They tell us much, but not enough. They lead us far, but stop too soon. They leave us in the labyrinths of doubt on the greatest moral question connected with our existence. In the Bible alone are these

truths found. It only sheds light on the field of darkness. This only shows our destiny. Without it man lives without knowing from whence he came, and dying takes a leap in the dark amidst awful suspense and fearful forebodings, not knowing where he is going.

The Bible, when viewed as a book of doctrines, loses none of its advantages to us. But at this point it increases in advantage to us, and from this consideration arises its importance, and as in its history, so in its doctrines, it stands alone, the oracle of the Church of Christ and the light of the Christian World; and all beyond the spread of this light is darkness and every evil work. Then, as the Bible rises in importance before the eye of our mind, by confiding in the indispensable advantage of its doctrines, so will the great requirement in the least, increasingly appear. The reasons will accumulate on our hands why we should search the Scriptures.

The doctrine of human depravity is inseparable from any enlarged degree of enjoyment. It is one of the leading and sovereign truths in all our systems of moral education. It constitutes the very foundation of true self knowledge. The old Grecian proverb, "Know thyself," was a great one indeed. Far too great to be fulfilled by any system of Grecian instruction. He only can know himself, who has been taught of God. For we cannot know ourselves until we know how depraved we are, nor will we seek aught for purity of heart, until we see and know our corruption.

The doctrine of our redemption by Christ, is an essential feature within the sphere of information. This is not only an offset to the knowledge of sin—a knowledge of the cure of sin, but it is embracing within the range of our wisdom the brightest mysteries of heaven. It is seeing the condescending love of God to man. It is beholding the Savior of the World. God manifest in the flesh and reconciling the world unto himself, by transferring the punishment due the guilty to the innocent, without prejudice to any of the divine perfections. Here, the angels would take lessons of man, for they desire to look into it; but man

knows it, because it is revealed to him. Here is a store of intellectual and moral worth and excellence, untraveled by the thoughts of the most adoring seraph around the throne. But the more than vulture-eye of man has caught this faith and he follows it to the whole treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Another essential feature in our system of moral education is the knowledge of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. Here is knowledge just in place. The knowledge which, most of all, we need. He that sees and feels that his heart is corrupt and views Christ crucified—views him as a Savior, immediately conceives the desire to know the means by which he may approach him—and how God can be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Is man the anxious inquiry of his heart? and as soon as he can be assured of this great truth, he makes the struggle, feels the change and knows God and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, in the pardon of his sins.

The great and mysterious doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, is hailed by the Christian world as their great beacon beyond the grave. That we must die is a truth universally known. All men are apprised of this constantly occurring circumstance. In the history of the world the sentence is written on every generation, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

In the language of another: "We carry forth and commit to the grave, the sleeping dust of those whom we love, and the inquiry forces itself upon the mind, will the much cherished flower spring forward and bloom to immortality. And from the bed of languishing we, ourselves, look down into the gloomy sepulchre and inquire, 'If a man die shall he live again?' Reason, Conscience, Nature, Analogy, do indeed, suggest the truth, the strong probability of an hereafter, but they furnish no convictions that satisfy. No certain conclusions where the mind pants for immortality." But in the Bible, God declares, he will raise the dead. And this declaration is revealed for our comfort and support. Here is a foundation, firm and moveless, on which to rest our hopes of the future

and all restoring event. Here, behind the gloomy detail of death and the sepulchre, is lit up the ever burning lamp of the glorious resurrection, and while it radiates against the walls of heaven itself, it throws forward corruscations ethereal, through the gloom profound, and like a beacon light, allures the Christian to the shore of immortality.

Not less desirable to man is the doctrine of future rewards and punishment.

There is a hell of interminable woe, and unquenchable fire, into which all the wicked rejectors and despisers of the Bible will be cast.

There is also a heaven of undying joy and eternal life, into which the lovers of the Savior will be gathered, to inherit the reward of their virtues, world without end.

Again, I ask: Where are these truths found? From what source do they come? What reflects this light upon the world? Did some shrewd philosopher search the human heart and reveal its conception? What ancient muse tuned its lyre to the first notes of man's redemption? What reasonable judge pronounced the truth of our salvation by faith alone? What artist first gave us the portrait of immortality—the original of which is beyond the curtain of time? Where is the historian that first revealed these facts?

Alas! for philosophers and poets, for darkness still surrounds them, and even prophets have died without the sight. Nay, verily, these truths are divine. They are the science of heaven—the philosophy of God—the revelation of Jesus Christ. A scheme laid in the skies, and completed on Calvary. Angels sang the anniversary of its birth, and the Lord of Heaven accompanied its first publication to man, and the honored and faithful emissaries of Jesus Christ spread it on canvass as the Holy Spirit moved the pen.

In the Bible, then, these truths are contained, and in the Bible only, have we the faithful word of God. In the Bible is the science of salvation. The light of eternity shining on the darkness of time. And, what declares more in its favor, is that this darkness is receding. The kingdom of light is widening, and the

spell of sin is breaking, and the Macedonian cry is coming on every breeze, and the Gospel of the Bible is gaining on every vessel. It rolls in Nile grandeur towards its long predicted destiny, to fill the earth, and in proportion to its spread is the light of the world.

Finally: The Bible, when viewed as a prophetical book, is of unrivaled importance to us.

It is said by an ancient author, that he who is acquainted with history, lives twice. He lives in the past by a historical association with facts and events, and in the present by observation. With equal propriety, it may be said, that he who is acquainted with prophecy, adds another life to his existence, and lives three times. He lives in the future by a prophetic association with future events. To say which of these lives is the most important, would puzzle our mind. Nor could our judgment decide which to save in the sad event that one must be sacrificed. His origin and destiny—his beginning and end—his fall in sin—his redemption by Jesus Christ, and his final account at the last day, are kindred and vital truths, bearing with equal weight on the existence of every man.

But if there can be a paramount interest in either, it is claimed by the future. To know the past, settles an otherwise ever rising curiosity, and imparts an indescribable comfort. To know the present, is a source of constantly recurring and immortal delight. But to know the future, opens the door of hope to man, and sheds more than a sunbeam of light on the boundless field of prospect, where all was gloom and doubt before.

Many of the periods and circumstances that most concern and affect the mind of man, are yet in the future. Some of which are, the world above, the tide of death, and the triumphs of the resurrection. These are items embraced in the knowledge of the Christian world, though in the far distant future. The final conflagration of all things. The day that will melt the elements with fervent heat. The day that will strike stars from their orbits like blasted figs. The day when the heavens shall pass away with a

great noise—and worlds crushed by worlds into the wildest ruin run. The day when the trump of God shall pour its omnific blast throughout the Universe, "and death's wide empire quake from its pale centre to its frigid extremities." The day that will summon the nations of the earth to the bar of final and inscrutable justice. The day that will end the dispensation of grace and trial with man, and introduce the solemn destinies and rewards of eternity. When the righteous retributions of Almighty God will overtake the world, and fix forever its abode in the lake of unquenchable fire, or exalt it to the mansions of the blest.

Again: May I inquire where are these truths found? With whom were they originated and what is their authority? Did some God of Apollo first pronounce these truths—or has the goddess of fortune turned partial to the Christian world. What wise men of Egypt, Babylon or Greece gave these lively oracles to us? Did some heathen heart or soothe sayer first penetrate the awful future? Nay, verily, these truths are divine. They are the prescience of God—the burden of the vision of the Holy Sees. They came in the burning message of the Spirit. In thus saith the Lord, and verily, verily, I say unto thee. Here, then, in the Bible of God is our eternity laid open—we hold it in our hands—we learn the past—we know the present—we see the future. The eyes of the world are turning to this light and soon all men will look upon it, wonder and adore.

Well may the poet exclaim:

"Hast thou ne'er heard
Of such a book? the author God himself,
The subject, God and man, salvation, life
And death—eternal life, eternal death—
Dread words; whose meaning has no end, no bounds—
Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord!
Star of eternity; the one star
By which the bark of man could navigate
The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
Securely; only star which rose on time,
And, on its dark and troubled billows, still,
As generation, drifting swiftly by
Succeeded generation, threw a ray
On heaven's own light, and to the hills of God,
The eternal hills, pointed the sinners eye.
"This book, this holy book, on every line
Marked with the seal of high divinity,
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love

Divine, and with the eternal heraldry
And signature of God Almighty stamped
From first to last—this ray of celestial light,
This lamp, from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and in the night of Time
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow;
And ever more beseeching men with tears
And earnest sighs, to read, believe and live:
And many to her voice gave ear, and read,
Believed, obeyed; and now, as the Amen,
True, Faithful witness swore, with snowy robes
And branchy palms surround the fount of life,
And drink the streams of immortality
Forever happy and forever young."

Thank God for the Bible. Thank God for the religion of the Bible. Take this blessed volume and press it to your bosom. It will be a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your pathway—a rock of inviolable safety from the assaults of the adversary of your soul, and a never-failing spring from whence you may derive your most exalted pleasures and richest consolations.

"It is said of Sir Walter Scott, that when he returned a trembling invalid from Italy, to die in his own native land, that the sight of home so much invigorated his spirits, that hope was entertained that he might recover, but finding that he must die, he said to his son-in-law 'Bring me the book!' What book? said Lockart. Can you ask what book? replied the man, whose works had charmed the world. 'There is but one!' Precious Bible truths that never grow old—riches that never fade—crowns that are never tarnished—bright hopes and incorruptible immortality, these are the rewards of all the lovers of the Bible."

II. OUR SECOND GENERAL PROPOSITION IS TO INQUIRE INTO THE DUTY OF SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES, AND THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THAT DUTY SHOULD BE PERFORMED.

1. We should search the Scriptures under the solemn conviction of their authority and importance. These two traits of the Bible, as we have so feebly described, should invariably affect your mind and occupy your attention in your sacred reading. We should be careful to guard against that common and fatal delusion of the world, that truth is too much

strengthened or weakened in its effect upon the mind, by the circumstances under which we hear it. The same truths read in the book, and heard from the mouth of a speaker will have quite a different influence. The book, which is but paper, is held in our hands, lies open on our tables, but produces no excitement in our feelings. The speaker stands before us with his expressive countenance, his graceful gestures, the warmth of his zeal, and the sweetness of his voice. All these affect the mind and excite the feelings of the hearer. We read the trial, verdict, and sentence of a criminal, the history of a battle, or the dying address of a martyr, and are somewhat moved, but had we been present to witness these scenes, what different emotions would have occupied us. Had we seen the criminal and heard his chains; had we heard the clank of arms and seen the wounded men; had we seen the martyrs flames as they curled around the devoted stake, and heard the wailings of his friends, how much more deeply would we have been affected with the truth. The application is natural. All the great events recorded in the Bible, did actually take place. We read of the deluge, but Noah saw it. We read of the destruction of the Sodomites, but Abraham saw the smoke of their ruins ascend like the smoke of a furnace. We read of God in pomp and splendor on Mount Sinai; of the fearful flashes of lightning, and the terrible peals of thunder, the long, lingering sound of the trumpet waxing louder and louder; but Moses led the hosts of Israel to the base of the trembling mountain and talked to God face to face. We read of the birth, life, miracles, death and exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ, but Peter and John heard his words, saw his miracles and witnessed his resurrection and ascension. They saw and believed. We hear and believe and only divest these truths of circumstances, and they have an equal influence on them and us. We have an omnipresent God—his word and whether heard from his mouth or read in his book it is the same.

2. But in searching the Scripture we should labor

to bring our minds under their influence, in proportion to their importance above any other truth.

What is naturally true of any inferior order of news, is equally true of the sublime intelligence of the Bible, the exercise of our judgment and the power of our will. We hear the song of the commedian and admire his note; but the news of the misfortune of a friend fills our eyes with tears of sympathy. A friend bequeaths us a fortune, we read it and exult over our prospects, but news from our physician that we must die, fills us with profound gloom. To-day a note from a friend bids us to a feast, but to-mor- now a letter informs us of the death of a father, and we abandon ourselves to expressions of the most immoderate grief. We turn to the Scriptures, we search them. Here, we hear the inspired strains of the harp of Israel, met by the hallelujahs of the heavenly elders, all strung and tuned in favor of him who hath loved us. Here before our eyes sinks in hopeless tragedy, a world of human beings. Here, in the last will and testament of a friend, is bequeathed to us the incorruptible riches of the kingdom of God. Here, news from our great Spiritual Physician announces our certain and speedy departure from this to another world.

Again: In the Bible, we read our invitation to the great supper of the Lamb, and here the death of our Father—our Lord Jesus Christ is detailed in the moving strains of the eloquence of the spirit. These are all written in terms, not to frighten, but to convince; not to excite the passions, but to enlighten the judgment; not to conceal our deep corruption, but to search our hearts so as to reveal and expose our deep depravity. But are we convinced? Are we enlightened? Does the authority and importance of the Bible move us? If not, read it again. Think of its authority! It must be true! Think of its importance! Your endless weal or woe depends on him you read to understand. Are you still unmoved? Then, oh, that your heart were marble, then would this hammer from heaven break it in pieces! Oh, that it were brass, then this fire from heaven would melt it,

and refine it from dross! Guard against infidelity at this point, because of entertaining doubts of the authority of what you read. Suffer none of your own interpretations to diminish the eternal value of these truths. Better believe them worse, if possible, than they really are, than to regard them as indifferent. Let all who are deceived, be deceived on the safe side. Beware of making baptism a saving ordinance—repentance a mere reformation of manner—the day of judgment, the destruction of Jerusalem, and hell, the grave. All these are stepping stones to infidelity, and take away the weight of the eternity of these truths from us.

Finally: I would have you guard against prejudice. Read with a sober, reflective state of mind. Throw away your preconceived notions. Forget the creed of your fathers. Have no preference for that which is most pleasing to flesh and blood. Like the miner searching for the precious metals of the earth, follow the pure vein of truth, for this is your interest. There is no way to shun these truths. Their importance and authority still press upon you. They will drive you to God, or lead you to embrace error and folly. Are you yet unmoved? Then remember that this is one of the strongest reasons why we should search the Scriptures. The harder your heart, the more you are in need of truth. The less taste you have, the more you should labor to acquire a taste. Here, and here only, is the medicine for your disease. Where else in the wide expanse of creeds will you find a remedy? Ever rally to this point, for a blessing is here. And remember that awful must be the condition of him who can adopt the following language as his experience:

> "But I can read each moving line,
> And nothing moves this heart of mine."

As my last direction then, I recommend that you bring to mind the sentiment embraced in the following stanza:

> "But power divine can do the deed,
> And that blest power much I need,
> Thy spirit can from dross refine
> And melt and change this heart of mine."

Then go to some secret place, seek some retired spot, take your Bible with you, kneel down, and implore on your heart, and on the truths you read, the light and power of the Holy Spirit. Ask God to take away your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh—a heart to understand his word. Then open the Bible and read. Try and understand every word you read —the construction of every sentence—the connection of every paragraph. Then close your Bible and lift your eyes to heaven and implore the help of the Holy Spirit. Then read again, and pray again. And if you remain unmoved, we recommend no more—except to repeat the plan. Darkness may increase around you. Temptation may engulf you in doubt, but summon all your resolution. Gather strength at every defeat. Turn every discouragement into a reason to renew your efforts. Go again to your sequestered place. Kneel again. Pray again. Here only is life. Anywhere else is death. On this point turns your final destiny. If you would shun hell, and if you would gain heaven, ever pursue this course, ever read and ever pray.

"Oh, may these heavenly pages be,
My ever dear delight!
And still new beauties may I see
And still increasing light."

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. Franklin Ball, D.D., son of Dabney and Penelope Ball, was born in Fairfax county, Virginia, October 4th, 1822. His parents being limited in means, greatly interfered with the early education of their children. The boys labored upon the farm in summer, and attended school during winter. When Franklin was about nineteen years of age, he attended two terms at an academy in Washington, D. C.,—the sainted Alfred Cookman was also a pupil, and was a personal friend of the subject of this sketch.

When Dr. Ball was twenty, he borrowed a small sum of money —his father went his security—and attended two terms at an academy in New Baltimore, Farquier county, Virginia. His funds gave out, and he was too conscientious to contract further indebtedness, and therefore returned to his home in Fairfax. A few days thereafter, an advertisement appeared in a local paper, announcing that a teacher was wanted to take charge of a country school. The day was fixed for all applicants to be examined, as to qualffications for teaching. Bro. Ball was one of three young men who applied for the place, and after undergoing the necessary examination, the school was given to him. Here he spent two years in teaching, and was quite successful.

In 1847, he was united in marriage with Miss Mary Catharine Delaney, of Dumfries, Prince William county, Virginia—a most happy event for him, as Mrs. Ball is, in every respect, a superior woman. She has always been a great help to her husband in his responsible and laborious duties as an itinerant minister. She is a leader in those branches pertaining to woman's work in the Church; is fluent in speech; is eloquent in exhortation and prayer, and is social, and generous to a fault.

Shortly after his marriage, Dr. Ball purchased a farm, and settled down, to what he then thought, was to be his life work, as he at that time, had a taste for the farm and field. He, naturally industrious, labored hard, but failed to accumulate property as he desired, and expected. In 1854, his eldest brother, John, who was in the ministry in Pennsylvania, died, and bequeathed his "saddlebags" to his brother Franklin (who had been converted at the age of fourteen, and was a consistent member of the Church), with the request that he would fill the place that he had left in the ministerial ranks. "This," says Dr. Ball, "settled the matter, and I yielded to the conviction which I had quietly, but stubbornly resisted for twelve years. In March,

1856, my application went up to the Baltimore Conference, but there was no room, and so I turned back with the hope that my conscience would allow me to remain on my farm. But my *call* to the ministry was so strong, deep and abiding that I could not rest. I lost my appetite, and could not sleep. Everything about me was out of joint. I had no enjoyment of farm, home, or life. I was miserable. I had, meanwhile, been elected Justice of the Peace, and my friends proposed to introduce me to political life. But I said in my heart, 'preach I must, and preach I will, if I have to go round the world on foot to find an open door.' In June of that year, altogether unlooked for to me, my way was opened into the West Virginia Conference. To Richmond I had been sent to hold an interview with Governor Wise, and to present to him a Bill of Exceptions in the case of a trial for murder. From Richmond I hastened to Buckhannon, Upshur county, the seat of the conference, and I was admitted on trial and appointed to Grantsville, Allegheny county, Md."

Thus Bro. Ball was ushered into the ministry. I have often talked with him on the subject, and he always expressed deep regrets that he had not yielded to the "call" earlier in life, and given to the Master many more years of earnest labor. As it is, however, his ministerial career has been, in every respect, a successful one; but he always seemed to feel that he begun later than he should have done. Well, this may be true, still I cannot but feel that he pursued the proper course. If more of our preachers would "tarry longer at Jerusalem," and learn more of business, more of men, and more of the ways of the world, it would be far better for them as individuals, and certainly better for the Church, as well.

On his first circuit, Bro. Ball labored two years successfully. In 1858-9, he spent two successful years on Brandonville circuit; 1860-1, he traveled Morgantown circuit, and 1862 he spent on Kingwood circuit. There were nineteen preaching places on this circuit, but he filled each of them every fourth week, until the latter part of the year, when he was assisted by Rev. S. W. Davis. In 1863-4-5, he was stationed at North Street Church, Wheeling. This was a very difficult, yet successful term. While at North Street, he, with other prominent citizens—including most all the members of the Legislature, which was then in session—were volunteers to apprehend the noted Confederate raider, John Morgan, who, with an immense body of cavalrymen, was passing up the Ohio side of the river. During his pastorate at this station, he spent two months at Louisville, Kentuckey, in the work of the Christian Commission. In 1866-7-8, Dr. Ball was stationed at Zane street Church, Wheeling. His term was a very successful one—the membership being increased, thoroughly organized, and a large new edifice was erected. His next station was at Triadelphia, six miles from Wheeling. This was in 1869-70-71. The church was greatly revived, and a large brick edifice was built. He spent the year

1872 in Charleston, where he was wonderfully successful. He was instrumental in securing the erection of one of the finest church buildings in the State, and took into the Church upwards of fifty members. In 1873-4-5-6, he was Presiding Elder of the Wheeling District. It was during the latter year of his term on the Wheeling District, that Mount Union College conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor in Divinity.

Dr. Ball was transferred to the Central New York Conference and was stationed at Phoenix, where he remained two years. His next station was at Marcellus, where he staid the full term of three years. He is at present, stationed in Elmira; and we are glad to know, is doing efficient work for the Great Head of the Church.

Dr. Ball is a man of unusual firmness of character, and is conscientious in all that he does. He would suffer his right arm to be cut off rather than encroach upon his conscience. Would that the States were filled with such men. He is a good preacher, and the world is better because he has lived in it.

SERMON VI.

BY

REV. FRANKLIN BALL, D.D.

THEME:—EVERLASTING HABITATIONS.

TEXT:—"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.,'—II. COR. v: 1.

In the Scriptures, the human body is compared to a house, a temple. For example, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."* And when Jesus said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. * * * He spake of the temple of his body."

In man's mental and moral faculties lie the power; of volition, constituting him a free moral agent hence he may, by a virtuous and holy life, honor the body and live, or he may, by an impure, sinful life, dishonor it and die; "For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."†

The body is an "earthly house." It is earthly in composition. "It seems at first thought somewhat strange that the head of the human family should have

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*I. Corinthians iii: 16-17. †Gallatians vi: 6, 8.

received his distinctive name from the affinity which he had, in the lower part of his nature, to the dust of the earth—that he should have been called Adam, as being taken in his bodily part from *adamah*, the ground; the more especially as the name was not assumed by man himself, but imposed by God, and imposed in immediate connection with man's destination to bear the image of God." And God said, "Let us make man (Adam) in our image, after our likeness." Man got his name *Adam* from the earth, *adamah*, not because of its being his characteristic dignity that God made him after his image, but because of this, that God made after his image one, who had been taken from the earth. The likeness of God, man had in common with the angels, but that as the possessor of this likeness, he should be *Adam*—this is what brought him into union with two worlds—the world of spirit and the world of matter—rendering him the center and the bond of all that had been made, the fitting topstone of the whole work of creation, and the motive principle of the world's history.

It is precisely his having the image of God in an earthen vessel, that while made somewhat lower than the angels, he occupies a higher position than they in respect to the affairs of this world."*

The human body is also earthly, by reason of that upon which it subsists—air, water and food, both animal and vegetable.

The phraseology of the text is peculiar: "Our earthly house of this tabernacle." Evidently the Apostle institutes a comparison between the human body and the Jewish tabernacle. The tabernacle was of very flexible and light material. It was portable and was moved from place to place in the wilderness, for temporary services. It was soon pitched and used, then it was as soon taken down and carried forward for similar use elsewhere, till it was superseded by the greater glory of the temple, "Whither the tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel." And how fragile are we. How sensitive

*McClintock and Strong, vol. 1. Also see Psalms viii: 5, and Heb. ii: 6,7

to pain. How constantly exposed to danger and injury. How subject to disease, and how surely destined to dissolution. The Psalmist beautifully describes the frailty of our human nature: "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest return, ye children of man. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as asleep; in the morning they are like grass, which groweth up; in the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth." Hence the prayer: "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as a handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee; verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity."

When one determines to build a house, the idea of a tenant or occupant enters into the plan, and the building is designed with reference to the convenience and comfort of the occupant. Thus has our Creator made our bodies with infinite care for the tenant—the immortal part. A house, while occupied by a good tenant, is attractive and inviting. It affords shelter from the storm and protection from heat and cold and danger. Its inmates, too, and associations make it the most delightful of all earthly retreats. This is especially true, if the religion of Jesus Christ holds sway in the household. Its groves and lawns, its flowers and birds, its fragrant breath and interior comforts make it the most desirable place on earth. Every breach is repaired. The foundations are preserved; the walls are carefully guarded against decay; broken panes are removed and new ones supplied, and the whole structure is kept in a state of neatness and preservation. But, let the tenant leave the house unoccupied, how changed the view. Soon, dead branches hang upon the trees; the beautiful lawn is overgrown with weeds and thistles; the choicest flowers which filled the air with their sweet perfume, now perish for the want of attention. The foundations of the house give way, the

walls curve and crumble, the roof is broken, and no longer affords any shelter from the storm as the wild winds of heaven sigh mournfully through the apertuures, while gloom and desolateness settle down upon the scene. Night birds gather upon its walls, reptiles crawl while serpants hiss and drag their loathsome and dreaded forms around its ruins; and rather than enter in and dwell there, we turn away from the desolation with shrinking and dread.

The human body is an "earthly house;" the soul is the tenant. While the body is inhabited, clothed and kept in repair, it is beautiful and attractive. The step is elastic, the cheek blooms with the beauty of health, the eye flashes with the light of life, and the countenance glows with the honest love that thrills the heart. Pleasant and kind words dwell upon the tongue, while deeds of kindness win our love. But let the soul be summoned hence—at once the step falters, the cheek grows pale, the eye is dull and sunken, while the countenance grows languid and haggard. The tongue refuses to repeat the name of the most trusted friend. The extremities grow cold and the dews of death settle upon the brow. Life's vital current is stagnant, the pulse fails to measure the passing moments; the heart throbs no longer; the tenant is gone; the earthly house is fallen; the body is in the grave, and the mourners go about the streets. Putrifaction sets in. Loathsome creatures take possession of the body, and we shrink from contact with the object which we have so much admired and loved.

And this separation of the soul and body seems to be a necessity; not simply because it has been so ordained of God, but in the very nature of the case it is a necessity. The soul has come forth from God, and is in a state of exile—lodging awhile as a banished prisoner in the earthly house, with the bolts and bars of immortality hedging it about. Thus imprisoned, it cannot get back to God, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor corruption cannot inherit incorruption." This ballast must be thrown off so that the soul may rise. These earthworks must be taken apart and thrown down. The

prison door must be opened by the touch of death. Then the fetters fall off, and the soul is free to spread her wings and mount and soar away to its native heaven.

While there is much about death in the breaking up of all the associations of life and the pangs of dissolution, yet to the good, death has no terror. The fear of death is removed, its sting has been extracted, the strength of the law has been exhausted upon him who has conquered death, and all beyond the grave is beautiful and inviting, because we have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. The gloom of the tomb has disappeared, like the mists of the morning before the rising of the sun of righteousness.

"The graves of all his saints He'll bless
And soften every bed."

We observe that in our text the future safety and happiness of the good are clearly asserted. They have a house—eternal—in the heavens. You and I have looked with pleasing awe upon the magnificent Capitol of the United States, with its massive dome lifting itself in its grand proportions hundreds of feet towards the sky. Men delight to look upon princely palaces with costly surroundings, and with all the appointments of royalty. We fancy the crowded metropolis, whose spires pierce the clouds and direct the eyes of the thronging multitudes heavenward. We remember the Centennial buildings and grounds of 1876, in Philadelphia, with their thousands of flags and banners fluttering and trembling in the winds. Also the emblems and productions of other nations. The beautiful lawns, the well-shaded walks, the cool and inviting retreats, the little lakes, the jetting fountains, the singing of birds, and the hundreds of thousands of people who thronged the enchanted place, day after day, for months, while the strains of sacred and martial music with National airs fell upon the ear from morning until evening—making up a scene of beauty and joy, which was both the wonder and admiration of the world. But what are all these, and more, compared with that city whose builder and maker is God? Of which Jesus has said,

"In my Father's House there are many mansions." "A building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." That vast metropolis of the universe. The home of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect. Where Jesus presides and reigns. You remember it has been measured by an angel with a golden reed, in John's presence. The foundations of its walls are garnished with all manner of precious stones. Its walls are great and high. It has twelve gates of pearl. The names of the twelve Apostles are written in heaven's dialect upon its foundations. The city lieth four square, and the length is as great as the breadth. The length, and the breadth, and the height are equal. Story upon story it towers, as clear as transparent glass. There is no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it. It has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. There, the tabernacle of God is with men. There, God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. There, there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. There, are the hundred and forty-four thousand, having their Father's name written in their foreheads. There, the voice of praise is as the sound of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder; while the celestial choristers sweep their harp strings and sing the new song before the throne. There, are those who are redeemed from the earth, and in whose mouth there was found no guile, for they stand without fault before the throne of God. They compose a great company—far beyond human computation—of all nations, kindred, peoples and tongues. They are clothed with white robes, and they have palms in their hands. They cry with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. While they sing all the angels round about fall before the throne on their faces and worship God, saying, "Amen! blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever."

These singers to whom the angels respond, "are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that siteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away tears from their eyes." O, what a home for the soul! What a building of God! What a city! But only pure and holy ones occupy the house of many mansions—eternal in the heavens. And on our part, the most thorough preparation must be made, so that we may be "meet to be partakers of an inheritance among the saints in light." Hence it is written, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Who would not practice any amount of self-denial, bear any cross, or submit to any reproach, in order to secure a home in these everlasting habitations? For one, I cannot afford to miss Heaven. Let it cost what it may, by the grace of God, Heaven must and shall be my home. Nor can you afford to run any risk in that direction. You and I have too many bright flowers blooming "over there," in the garden of the Lord, to be indifferent about the future home of the soul—dear loved ones up yonder, robed and crowned and saved, who bend down over the shining battlements of the city of our God, beckoning us away from these rude and thorny scenes, and waiting, almost impatiently, till we are ready, and until God shall have accomplished his purposes with us. Then the order shall be given, and we shall strike our tents and "come to join Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads."

It is the privilege of all Christians to have the assurance contained in the text: "For we know," etc. What a blessed privilege thus to live. Oh, what joyous liberty and freedom from fear may be ours! Truly it is blessed to be able to say, "For me to live is Christ,

and to die is gain." Who can feel safe short of this knowledge? This is a life of peril. It is a scene of constant strife and watching. The allurements of the world are around us. We have to meet the shrewdness and the "well-circumstanced" temptations of Satan so long as we remain in the flesh. The infirmities of our fallen nature are upon us. The pains of disease lay hold of us. We have to stand by the graves of our withered and lost hopes. The cold and chiling storms of adversity and disappointment beat upon us. Separation by death comes. Family ties are rudely severed. Children and parents and companions are torn asunder by the destroyer. Graveyards and tombstones are in every neighborhood. Habiliaments of mourning meet us on every hand. Hearts—loving hearts—are smitten and in nearly every home on earth there is a vacant chair. How rapidly and suddenly do these earthly houses fall, and how we tremble as we look over the wrecks around us, and the query arises, who shall repair this desolation and ruin?

In answering this all important inquiry, we must turn to him, who said to the sorrowing ones, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Listen, ye stricken ones, to the comforter. "Let not your hearts be troubled; * * * * * * in my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would not have told you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also;" and "For if we believe that if Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him."

However, dark and threatening the storm that comes down upon our paths; faith discerns the silver lining, indicating the light and the glory beyond. For though sin surrounds and temptations assail us; infirmities and disease may fall to our lot, and passing away be written upon everything coming within the range of our vision, while like autumn we be thrown over the face of the earth; yet the finger of God comes out and inscribes in characters of living light upon the threatening skies, as they grow brighter before the

vision of our faith, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

I have read of the so-called Island of Gibralter, in Lake Erie, near Put-in-Bay, with its stone castle, its turrets and towers, erected by a banker, in the days of his opulence. To those around his Gibralter, he dispensed noble hospitalities; he sustained a little church nigh at hand; splendid saloons and airy chambers were open to summer uses and enjoyments, for Christian ministers. As many as an hundred clergymen have been seen at one time, recruiting in the beautiful shade, the guests of the great financier. But the breath of misfortune has blasted the scene, and now, the castle has been bolted, the airy halls closed, the once well-trimmed sod is grown wild, the shell paved walks are washed and rugged; and the gloom of neglect and solitude hang like a pall over this once brilliant home of wealth, of power and of worldly ambition. Thus, often, come and go, earthly possessions with their greatness, their grandeur and their beauty. But, Christian friends, though you and I may have no earthly Island Gibralter, adorned by all of the appointments of wealth, our Bible tells of a place where moth and rust corrupt not, nor do thieves break through. There we lay up our treasure, and there our hearts are also. Its builder and maker is God. His resources are infinite. The hand of power shall never bar its gates against the heirs of the kingdom. The golden streets are far beyond the floods of time, nor shall the pall of gloom and decay ever settle upon that scene. But with our sainted Dr. William Hunter we may sing:

"My heavenly home is bright and fair;
Nor pain nor death can enter there;
Its glittering towers the sun outshine:
That heavenly mansion shall be mine.

Let others seek a home below,
Which flames devour, or waves o'erflow;
Be mine the happier lot to own,
A heavenly mansion near the throne.

Then fail the earth, let stars decline,
And sun and moon refuse to shine,
All nature sink and cease to be,
That heavenly mansion stands for me."

This house belongs to God; the text so states. "It is a building of God;" and Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." And yet, "we have it." What a happy thought, just as our children have the houses that belong to us. Our children have rights and privileges at home in the enjoyment of which we protect them. We are more careful to provide a home and an estate for the children than for ourselves. And it is a great joy to a parent to know that a child loves its home. How pleasing it is to our heavenly father to know that we, as his children, love the place he has prepared for us; and we are joyfully hastening and singing on towards the home of the soul.

And me thinks we'll not be strangers in our father's house; but we shall know each other there. It seems to me, that it would rob heaven of almost half its glory, if I should not recognize there, in some way, those who have been my nearest and dearest friends on earth. What family sociability there will be when we all get home from our varied wanderings, and scenes of conflict and conquest. How shall we delight to rehearse, in heaven's dialect, the incidents of the journey, as we traveled home—its sorrows and its joys, and draw the contrast. "As we have heard, so do we now see, in the city of our God." We have read and sung of Jesus; but now we behold the king in his beauty. We used to hear that parted friends should meet again, who have loved; and here we all are, father and mother, brother and sister, parents and children.

> "And then for joy we'll fold our wings,
> And loud the lovely sonnet sing—
> We're safe at home."

Lastly: Believers know whither Christ has gone, and the way we know. We well understand our relations to our heavenly father. "Our conversation is in Heaven." "And we walk in the light as God is in the light." "Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for, before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God." David cried

out, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest." Job, as the earthly house of his tabernacle was tottering to its fall, said, with unfaltering faith, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." And just as Paul went forth from prison to death, he wrote to Timothy: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day." So has it been with many of our personal friends, whom we well remember. In life and in death the Holy Ghost bears his witness with our hearts, that we are born of God, and heaven is our home.

I remember, as my now sainted father was dying, and the family were gathered about the bed of death, he rallied; and amid the raptures of the hour, he said: "I seem to be traveling in a land unearthly in appearance, stretching out in an illimitable prospect before my vision. I walk amid fields of greenest verdure; flowing rivers and running brooks; shaded groves and blooming flowers; the companions of other years accompany me, and the countenances of departed friends cheer me." Here the pilgrimage of life reached its last step, the valley of the shadow of death was traversed to its most distant verge; when the light of an eternal day broke in upon his soul, and he whispered, "I am almost there," and entered into rest. My mother and six children of the seven have joined him in the land of rest. Together they rest in the family burying ground, at Ball's Cross Roads, near Arlington, Virginia. Our two older children lie buried upon the Alleghany mountains, in Western Maryland, within the bounds of my first circuit, West Virginia Conference. A few days ago, our little grandson, Franklin, a beautiful child, suddenly died, and now "sleeps in the valley," in Marcellus, New York. Their earthly houses have fallen, the tabernacles have sunk in ruinous decay; prostrate they lie in the earth. The citadel has been stormed by disease, and the strong-hold has been carried. The winding-sheet and shroud are the flags of

truce displayed, showing that they have surrendered to the last enemy; and the badges of mourning on every hand, are the black banners waving in token of the cruel triumph, over the prostrate forms of those whom we have so tenderly loved.

Now, all this is the result of sin. God did not ordain all this mischief and ruin. It is the work of Satan. An enemy hath done this. But, blessed be God, Jesus Christ has come to destroy the works of the devil, and repair the wreck that has come upon us. He will bring together our scattered dust; and by his resurrection, forever will recover us from the grasp of the destroyer. He will call us forth from our dusty beds; and put upon us the robes of his own immortality. For, although we are sown in corruption, we shall be raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, but raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, but raised a spiritual body. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." And we shall be satisfied when we awake with his likeness. We look out over the earth as one vast burying ground—a valley of dry bones; but Jesus, the universal deliverer, shall open the gates of death and release the captives. The Prophet Hosea foresaw the oncoming gospel of resurrection power, and through him God speaks: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction." And when the trumpet's blast shall roll through earth and sky, we shall start into a new life, while the parting heavens disclose the descending Son of God, coming to gather up his jewels; then, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the change shall be wrought and the work shall be done; "so when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? * * * Thanks be unto

God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"And when Jesus doth appear,
Soul and body
Shall his glorious image bear,"

"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Now, should an unconverted man read the foregoing discourse, he will not find a word of comfort, nor a ray of hope in it for him, while out of Christ. Why? Simply because his failure to receive Christ, keeps him beyond the range of these "exceeding great and precious promises;" and while he maintains his present attitude, there is naught before him, "But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

I once stood by the bedside of a man who knew his end was nigh. He was the head of a family—intelligent, and a superior business man. He had been the subject of numerous, earnest efforts and prayers, but he was a man of intemperate, bad habits. He knew he was soon to die and meet his God. By his request I sang "The Precious name." He then asked me to read the 23d Psalm. He remained quiet and attentive till I read, "yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," etc. "Stop," said he, "I can't say that. O, if I could say that, it would be worth worlds to me! Here I am about to die, and I'm not ready. Jesus is not mine. No one can go with me. I'm so lonely and nothing but darkness and ruin before me. O, if I could only say, I fear no evil; but I can't. What shall I do? What shall I do? Won't you pray for me?" I again prayed for him, and bade him farewell. I never again saw him. Soon after this he died as he had lived; at least so far as human judgment could decide. But, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the un-

righteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon?" Then he will stand within range of the promises, and in the light of God—in companionship with Jesus he may pass through the valley of the shadow of death, to fairer worlds on high, and enter the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. Ashford Hall was born in Preston county, West Virginia, December 22, 1826. His early life was spent on a farm in his native county. He had limited educational advantages, but improved all he had in such a way as to get a pretty thorough knowledge of the English language, and such rudimentary mathematics as were then taught by the district pedagogue. He attended several terms at the Northwestern Virginia Academy, where he studied the higher branches, and thus acquired a fair education.

Brother Hall was blessed with pious parents, who gave him an early religious training. Their house was the home of the itinerant ministers, who pioneered the paths of gospel civilization, amid the hills and valleys of this western portion of the mother State—Virginia. He was converted at the age of fifteen. Prior to entering the ministry, he served some two years or more as class leader. June 16, 1849, Brother Hall was licensed to preach, and was recommended for the traveling connection by the Quarterly Conference of Kingwood circuit. The following October, at the session of the West Virginia Conference, at Clarksburg, he was admitted to the ranks of the regular ministry; and but few of his other brother clergymen can say as much, he has answered "present" at every roll call of the Conference since that time.

Brother Hall is a man of method in all that he does. He is among the most faithful of men. He can always be depended upon. He never shirked responsibilities of any kind. He is as regular as a clockworks. His sermons are model productions of pure English. He never enters the pulpit without thorough preparation. His discourses, therefore, are even, regular—always good. He was never robust, but always managed to do a vast amount of hard study and work. He has served the Church as circuit rider, stationed preacher and Presiding Elder, always faithfully and well. During his ministry in the West Virginia Conference, he received over two thousand persons into the Church on probation. Many sheaves, as the result of his labor, will ultimately be gathered on the highlands of Heaven. He was recently transferred to the Central Ohio Conference, and stationed at Rawson, where, under God, we trust he will yet

perform a faithful service for the Master, for many years to come.

From a recent letter received from Brother Hall, I extract a paragraph. He says: "My wish is to spend my remaining years, or days, in the Master's work; but with more complete consecration and greater success. Humbly trusting in the infinite merits of Jesus, I hope, when the end shall come, to pass from the fatigueing toils below, to the refreshing and delightful scenes above.—I hope to live and work forever."

SERMON VII.

BY

REV. ASHFORD HALL.

THEME:—OUR MISSION.

TEXT:—"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world."—JOHN xvii: 18.

These words form a part of the touching address of the Son of God to the Father, just before his betrayal and crucifixion. Though the scenes of the Garden and Calvary were before him, he did not forget his followers. In the fullness of his sympathy, he prayed for them: not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they might be kept from evil. Notwithstanding he foresaw and foretold what they would be called to do and endure, he sent them into a world of toil and trial. The apostles are spoken of. They were divinely called, and commissioned to perform a specified work—to preach the Gospel. But not them exclusively. They could not, in person, fulfill the command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." And the accompanying promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," shows that others were included. These were representative men. They stood at the head of a long line of laborers, that was to reach "unto the end of the world." They were to commence a work that was to be carried on till every fallen child of Adam should hear the joyful message of salva-

tion. Every true minister receives a similar commission, and falls into the regular succession.

But not ministers alone are sent. Every man has his mission. No one's life is an accident. God is the Creator; he has made nothing in vain; design runs through all his works—through senseless matter in its varied forms and arrangements—through all the grades of sentient existence, from the insect to the Archangel. And is man an exception? Man, whom God has more richly endowed than all beside; who can think, reason, will, review the past and contemplate the future. Can we suppose such a wonderful being was formed just to fill up an empty space, or to float aimlessly through the Universe? He who thinks so, is shamed by every humming insect, rebuked by the clods he treads beneath his feet. The wisdom of God precludes the idea of aimless existence. His goodness proclaims a benevolent purpose.

"God has his plan for every man."

We may safely assume, that he who gave us existence, who gave us such exalted rank in the scale of intelligent beings—and bestowed upon us such wonderful powers, designed us for a noble destiny; that he has a mission for us to fulfill, corresponding to the powers bestowed; a work for us to do commensurate with our capacities, and the opportunities and facilities afforded.

What is the object of our existence? What end had the creator in view when he gave us being, and sent us into the world? To ascertain the divine purposes, should be our first business. On the threshold of life, before forming plans of our own, we should ask in humble submission, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" This is a question of vital importance—a point on which character and destiny are made to turn.

The text may throw some light on this question—may help us to a solution of the problem of life. These words embrace not only the fact that we are sent, but that we are sent on a special mission. A mission bearing some resemblance to that on which

Christ himself was sent. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them."

The sphere of labor is the same. We are sent to the same world to which Christ was sent.

There is a similarity in the object of our mission. The end to be accomplished by our existence is, in one aspect, the same as that which brought the Lord of Life and Glory to our world. Our work differs from his in many respects. It is not the same in nature. It falls infinitely short in measure and value. But in its ultimate aims and issues, it is substantially the same.

The primary object was the glory of God, and subservient to this, the salvation of men. Jesus was sent to repair the ruin which sin had wrought He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." No other work brings so great glory to God, as that which is done for man's salvation. Look abroad on the universe. Some perfection of the Creator is imprinted on every creature. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork."

> "These mighty orbs proclaim his power,
> Their motions speak his skill."

But in the work of man's salvation, is manifested all the divine attributes.

> "Here the whole Deity is known,
> Nor dares a creature guess,
> Which of the glories brighter shone,
> The justice or the grace."

When our Lord had fulfilled his mission, on the eve of his departure from the world, he said, in reference to all he had done for man's deliverance, "I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do."

Such was the object of our creation: Each one is sent into the world with the explicit injunction, "Thou shalt glorify me." And when by sin we forfeited the life he gave us, he duplicated the obligation, by giving his Son for our ransom. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." This is the chief end of our existence.

In no other way can we contribute to that end so effectually as in efforts to save men from sin. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father, which is in heaven."

There is a resemblance, also in the manner of fulfillment. The Son of God was not sent to spend a life of luxurious ease. There was a prescribed work assigned him. "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is yet day." And with what cheerfulness and pleasure it was performed. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

His was a life of toil. But little is known of his early life. Only a few incidents are recorded. He was subject to his parents. He was known at Nazareth as "the carpenter's son." It is therefore probable that he wrought with his hands in an humble occupation; that he was subject to all the inconveniences and hardships of a life of poverty. But from the time he emerged from his obscurity, he was incessant in labor. He went about doing good, dispensing food to the hungry, health to the sick, sight to the blind, joy to the sorrowing, life to the dead.

His was a mission of suffering. "He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He suffered from weariness, from hunger, from contact with a wicked world. He endured the contradiction of sinners and the assaults of satan. A life of unparalleled suffering, closed amid the untold agonies of the Garden and the Cross.

In the human life of Jesus, we have the pattern of our own. There is a work for each to do; a cross for every one to bear. The Creator designed us for action. These bodies, so "fearfully and wonderfully" formed; these souls, so richly endowed with boundless capacities of thought and feeling, of will and reason—these opportunities and facilities, all proclaim a work to be done. "Go work in my vineyard," is the divine command. The obligation is universal. None are exempt. All are not required to do the same work, nor an equal amount of work. The work varies with

the talents of the laborers and the means and opportunities of usefulness.

The mission assigned the minister, in nature and objects, may bear a stronger resemblance to that of the Savior; but the work of every man differs not materially from his in its aims and results.

It is the duty of most persons to pursue some secular business. But in whatever field we are called to labor, one common motive must control the conduct, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

We are sent to suffer as well as work. "Unto you it is given . . . to suffer." We need the discipline of trial and suffering to strengthen our virtues, to complete our character, to prepare us for usefulness here, and for higher work and reward hereafter. So opportunity is afforded to all, by doing and suffering, to answer the great end of existence.

We are sent of God. Whether pursuing a sacred or secular vocation, we bear a divine commission. The practical recognition of this fact, is the great want of the Church. Every member—the weakest, the youngest—should feel that he has a work to do, and that for its performance he will be held strictly accountable in the day of final reckoning; or rather, we have need to realize the elevating and soul-inspiring fact that God has graciously permitted each one the high and glorious privilege of doing something for his glory, and the good of men. He has not placed in "priestly hands the exclusive patent for saving souls." He has bestowed the power and conferred the right on all his followers. The rich rewards of Christian effort, may be obtained by the feeblest and most obscure. Even a child may win souls from sin and death. From the narrowest sphere, from the deepest vale of poverty and obscurity, may go forth influences wide as the world and boundless as eternity.

The mission we are sent to fulfill, whether viewed in its relations or in its results, is one of great dignity and importance. Ours is no ordinary work. We are called to follow the footsteps of the Son of God; to perform a similar service; to toil in the same sphere

and for the same end. It brings man into sympathy and association with God in accomplishing the greatest work ever performed. He might have employed other instruments to affect his purposes. He could have caused the lightnings to trace his bow on the clouds, and the thunder to proclaim its threatenings. The sunbeams might have been made to write the Gospel on the azure canopy above us, and the winds and waves might have published the conditions of pardon. Angels, burning with intense desire for his glory, would gladly have become the heralds of glad tidings to a fallen race. He might indeed have dispensed with all instruments, and by his Almighty Spirit, by inward movings or outward manifestations, accomplished the work of man's salvation.

But, reserving his power, and setting aside all other methods and instruments, he has seen fit in his wisdom to take man into partnership with himself in this work—a work of such vast importance as to engage the thoughts and enlist the sympathies and energies of a triune God; that brought the Son of God to earth, to toil, to suffer, and to die; and that calls forth his continued intercession at the right hand of the Father. Is it not astonishing that such a work should be committed, in any degree, to the agency of feeble, sinful man! But so it is, "We are workers together with him." And so fully has he committed this work to human instrumentality that he seldom, if ever, saves a soul without that agency. To take the servant's place, to perform any act that will glorify God, or in any measure advance his kingdom, imparts a moral grandeur to one's life. It lifts the child of earth to the dignity of a seraph—makes him the peer of angels. But to be sent on so high a mission, to do "the work of the Lord," to be "laborers together with God," raises poor fallen humanity to a height of glory that is indescribable.

This mission imposes fearful responsibilities. The obligation of duty, high and sacred, is upon us. We cannot evade it. We cannot transfer it. It is for each of us to enjoy the pleasure and honor of performance, or bear the shame and punishment of neg-

lect. If we refuse to respond to the call which summonses us to live for the glory of God; if we choose instead to spend our time and employ our powers for merely selfish purposes, however successful we may be in the achievement of the objects which usually engage the attention of men, we shall fail to answer the great end of our existence. Temporal prosperity may smile upon us; fortune may dispense her richest favors. We may revel and riot in all the pleasures the world may bestow; but true happiness will be beyond our reach. Every flower which blooms along our path will give out poison in its perfume, and we shall go down to our graves with the terrible, the withering, blighting consciousness of an unfulfilled destiny, and the eternal future will be a scene of "darkness, desolation and death," for "what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

But if we do the work assigned us, whatever it may be, we shall fulfill the obligations of duty and meet the conditions of reward. The glory of God is not opposed to our welfare. We are not to think of it as something even separate from our interest. They are perfectly harmonious. They are indeed inseparable. While the divine glory is the ultimate end, our good is not forgotton. Subordinately this work is imposed, these trials entailed, for our sake, that we may obtain a noble character, and secure greater good here and hereafter. Now, is the hope of reward inconsistent with a single purpose to glorify God? Moses "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Even Christ himself "for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross and despised the shame."

Is the Christian sent on a difficult and responsible mission? There is much to encourage. He goes not alone. Angels are his ministers, charged to keep him in all his ways, his body-guard, strong-armed for his defense by day, and stationed faithful sentinels around his couch by night.

He has the promise of divine protection and support. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; mine eye shall be upon thee." The shield

of omnipotence is spread above him. "The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless—I will come unto you. I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever."

In the hour of trial, where toil and hardship weigh the spirits down; when grief wrings the heart with anguish; when friends forsake and fortune frowns, how full of comfort the assurance, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. As thy day, so shall thy strength be." Have we not always found it so?

As we look back on years of toil, we can say with Samuel, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." And as we look forward, the future becomes luminous in the light of the precious promise, "So, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." If, with honest purpose, we engage in this blessed work, we may expect the joy of success. We may not accomplish all we desire, but the effort to do good is never wasted—

"If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters returning
Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill thee full of refreshment.'

Success is certain. "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord." "To him that soweth righteousness is a sure reward." "In due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not." Weary toiler in the Master's vineyard, think of the results that will follow the salvation of a single soul! It is reserved from death and the undying agonies of the world of woe. It enters upon a life of endless and progressive happiness. A period will come when that soul will have enjoyed more pleasure, than the whole race experienced on earth from the creation to the end of time. More than this, it becomes the instrument of bringing others, thousands it may be, to a like glorious destiny. Not one alone; many you may turn to righteousness, each of whom becomes the fountain of influences whose streams, flowing in a thousand channels down the ages, may bear myriads to the home of the blessed.

In this work is experienced the purest pleasure attainable in the present life. Who that ever realized

the joy of leading as inner to the Cross of Christ, would exchange it for all the pleasures wealth and royalty can bestow? It would be difficult to form a conception of the joy the faithful servant of God shall feel when, standing on the further limit of a well-spent life, reviewing the past, he can say in his measure, as the Savior said, "I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work thou hast given me to do." Then, adorned and enriched with trophies won from earth and hell, he goes down peacefully to the Jordan of death; the hills of immortality full in view, and shining ones, saved by his efforts, who had passed before to the better land, come down on the golden shore to greet him with glad welcome to their bright abode. And who shall tell the joy that will thrill his heart through the oncoming ages, as he shall witness one after another wafted to the eternal shore, borne thither by influences he originated while on earth; and when time is no more, to dwell where Jesus is; to bask in his approving smile; to stand among that crowned and shining throng, to receive the grateful benedictions of multitudes who own him as the instrument of their salvation; to meet their loving glance, to bear their swelling hallelujahs to God that he ever had existence. Oh, this will be joy—"joy unspeakable and full of glory!"

This life, then, so high in its aims, so rich in its revenues of happiness and honor, is only preparatory to the higher bliss and glory beyond the grave. It is but the infancy of existence—the bud of being. The flower is to bloom and the fruit to ripen in the purer world above. If these probational years are well spent, we shall rise to a state of glory and felicity transcending our highest hopes. Look at the promises. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Then, "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." They are exempt from all the ills of this life; they bear the likeness of Christ; they

dwell with him; they behold his glory; they share it; they reign with him. They experience "fullness of joy and pleasures forever more." These passages indicate the character, but not the measure of the reward. The reality will exceed all that is revealed, or that the mind can conceive. "As it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

This life is preparatory to higher service also. We are here at school, serving apprenticeship for the great business of that higher life, soon to begin, never to end. If, in this initial period; with all our ignorance and weakness, we may glorify God, can we suppose that in the state of perfection, we shall cease to employ our powers for his glory? Both reason and revelation point to a state of tireless activity. "They rest not. Labor, there, will not, as here, be attended with fatigue. There will be no weariness of the body, no flagging of the soul's energies. Every power will be forever fresh and strong, for whatever service we may be permitted to perform. That the eternal years will not be whiled away in idleness, is indicated by the desire which good men feel for active employment. "I delight to do thy will, O, my God!" is the spontaneous utterance of every renewed soul. This desire becomes more intense as life passes, nor does it die as death approaches. Payson, on his death bed, said, "My soul, instead of growing weak and more languishing, as my body does, seems to be endued with an angel's energies, and to be ready to break away from the body and join those around the throne." And the sainted Fisk, in his last hours, said, "We were not placed here to be idle; no, nor shall we be idle in heaven. I feel, indeed, as if I should hardly want to go there if I thought I should be idle. If the Lord take me away, he has something for me to do, for he never gave me such an energy of soul as I now feel that I have, without designing me to employ it." These aspirations are prophecies of a glorious future. Here, obligation is measured by ability. We are expected to do what we are able to perform.

If the same law governs there, as doubtless it will, what a work will be assigned us. Every power will be perfect. With perceptions of truth and duty so clear that error in sentiment or act will be impossible; with powers of vision that will meet no obstruction, and find no boundary within the limits of space; with powers of motion, in comparison with which the sunlight is not more swift; with a universe for a field, and an eternity for the period of service, what may not the glorified soul accomplish; and these capacities for doing and enjoying may increase through unwasting ages.

And shall the servants of God, sent on such a glorious mission, complain of toil and sacrifice? With such bliss in possession, and such undying honors in prospect, shall we murmer at our lot? Had we a thousand lives to live, each one as full of hardships and trial as this, we might well devote them all to this blessed service. Give me a place among those who work for Jesus. Let me be instrumental in saving souls from death, and I will gladly leave to those who wish to gain them, the wealth and honors of earth. To contribute in any degree to such a result, even to the imparting of a good thought, or inspiring a noble purpose, is a grander achievement than the founding of an empire, or the conquest of the world.

My brethren, there is set before us an object worthy of the aims and efforts of immortal minds. Let us draw inspiration from the majesty of our mission, and, baptized afresh by the Holy Spirit, go forth to win new conquests in the Master's cause. Let us toil where he appoints, and suffer what he sends. Thus shall we fulfill our mission. God will be glorified, souls immortal saved, and we prepared for the rewards of the endless life which lies before us.

And when our work is done, as one by one we pass away, may we fall at our post, and amid the welcome of angels and the joyous greetings of glorified spirits, saved by our efforts, may we each hear from the lips of him who sent us, in accents sweeter than a seraph's song, the thrilling plaudit, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, * * * enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. Edward W. Ryan is a native of Fayette county, West Virginia. He is now in the forty-fifth year of his age, and is as young, to all appearances, as he was twenty years ago. He had poor facilities for procuring an education; but from boyhood he had an insatiable appetite for books. His father was a school teacher of the old-time sort, who assisted him in every way possible. Early in life, the subject of this sketch read all the books he had at home, or could procure in the neighborhood, including Paxton's travels in the Holy Land, Dr. Dick's Works, Pollack's Course of time, Comstock's Philosophy, &c. His parents were religious, and very early in life, he heard the story of the Cross. Among the first things he can now remember, and the impressions then made have followed him through life, were the efforts of his mother to implant in his mind the fatherhood of God, and his responsibility to the author of his existence. At the age of nineteen, he was converted, and joined the M. E. Church at a camp meeting in Nicholas county, which was under the supervision of Rev. James L. Clark, now one of the fathers in Israel; and from that time to the present, he has maintained a religious life.

After utilizing what common school and home instruction he could command, he attended for a number of terms, Allegheny College, an institution under the direction of the Baptist Church, at Blue Sulphur Springs, Virginia. This was a good school, and here Bro. Ryan received a liberal education.

He informs us that it was his intention, in early life, to preach the Gospel; but just how and where to begin, he could not arrange in his mind. His desire was to practice law, and preach occasionally, as a local minister; but under no circumstances could he reconcile himself to the regular work of the itinerancy. Before he left home for school, he received local preacher's license from the hands of Rev. James L. Clark, who was at that time Presiding Elder of the Charleston District; and it was during his college career, that he was trying to arrange his future course in life.

The Lord, however, was at work upon the conscience of the young man; and, when urged by friends, he half-way consented to allow his name to be presented for the regular work, to the annual Conference, which met in Wheeling, March 13, 1861. Just before

the convening of that Conference, however, he wrote the Presiding Elder not to present his name. He was, nevertheless, sent to Nicholas circuit as junior preacher. He accepted the position, but the war soon after broke out, and he and his colleague, Benjamin Darlington, were compelled to abandon their work.

During this year, the Convention which framed the Constitution for West Virginia, met at Wheeling, and Bro. Ryan, next to the youngest man in that body, represented Fayette county. When the convention adjourned, he started home, intending to become a candidate for the Legislature and continue in politics, for which he had a great liking. Before going home, however, he attended the session of Conference, which met at Parkersburg, March 12, 1862. During this session, he heard several missionary addresses, which seriously impressed him, and he made up his mind to take another appointment. He was thereupon sent to Malden Circuit, where he remained until the next September. But on account of the civil war, he was again compelled to leave his work, because of the withdrawal of the Federal forces from the Kanawha Valley. He went to Ohio and engaged in teaching, and intended to remain until the next Conference, which was to meet at Fairmont, March 18, 1863. Being greatly pleased with his situation as a schoool teacher, he wrote Presiding Elder Clark, that he did not then desire to return to the ministry. Rev. Henry Stevens was made Presiding Elder of the Charleston District, and he promptly informed Bro. Ryan that he (Ryan) had been assigned to duty on Point Pleasant Circuit. He was greatly disappointed, and obeyed the call with many tears. But he went forth into the Master's field, and this may be regarded as the beginning of his regular itinerant work, which has continued, without interruption, for more than twenty years.

The next session of Conference was held at Parkersburg, March 16, and by it he was stationed at Catlettsburg, Kentucky, where he spent two pleasant and successful years—the church having grown in membership from twenty-one to one hundred and eight. He next spent three years at Hartford City; and in March, 1869, he was stationed at Charleston. Here he remained two years, doing earnest and successful duty, and was sent from that place to Chapline Street Church, Wheeling. For two years be preached to large congregations in Wheeling, and at the Conference held at Guyandotte, he was stationed at Morgantown, the seat of the State University, and the pleasantest appointment in the Conference. He remained at Morgantown three years, when he was sent back to Charleston. When three Conference years had come and gone, at Parkersburg the Conference again assembled, and he was stationed at Grafton, remaining two years. His next appointment was the Wheeling District, as Presiding Elder, where he is now serving his third year. Before he came to the Wheeling District, he preached eighteen consecutive years, and only changed territory six times, thus averaging the full term in each appointment.

Bro. Ryan's ministerial career has been a successful one. He is an attractive preacher; has a delightful imagination; is fluent in speech; has unparalleled social qualities, and is generous and true. He has the energetic mode of presenting a subject, and is frequently powerful, because experimental and practical.

March 8, 1866, Bro. Ryan was united in marriage with Miss Susan Cherrington, of Gallipolis, Ohio. Mrs. Ryan is a most estimable Christian lady, who has shared with her husband the joys and burdens of life, and has always made his home comfortable and happy. She is among the very best women the writer ever knew.

SERMON VIII.

BY

REV. EDWARD W. RYAN, P.E.

THEME:—THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH.

TEXT:—"Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no man come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."—ISAIAH lii: 1.

Zion, as we find it in the Old Testament, and Sion in the New Testament, was the name applied to the highest mount at Jerusalem. It rises about twenty-five hundred feet above the placid bosom of the Mediteranean sea, and from two to three hundred feet above the narrow valleys which nestle at its base. It is separated from Akra on the north and Mount Moriah on the north-east by the narrow valley of Tyrosoean. It had the valley of Gihon on the west, that of Hinnom on the south, and the memorable vale of Kidron on the east.

This mount, because of its superior elevation above the surrounding country, was selected by the Jebusites as a favorable site, and upon it they erected a citadel. This citadel was besieged by King David, who commanded the hosts of Israel, and the Lord gave it into his hand. Pleased with the surroundings, he made this the capital of his kingdom; and transferred the court thither from Hebron, and brought the Ark of the Lord and placed it in a tent or tabernacle, pitched for that purpose. On this account this has often been styled in Scripture the "holy hill." Here David constructed a city, including a palace,

which altogether was denominated "the city of David." No labor or cost was spared in order to make this city the perfect ideal of the cultured king of Israel. The material out of which it was builded was of the finest quality, and this was brought together in the very best architectural style. Circumscribing the whole, was a strong wall, built in the face of the enemies of Israel, with high towers at intervals, upon which watchmen were placed who kept their daily and nightly vigils. From their superior eminence, they were enabled to survey the surrounding valleys; to give the alarm in case of an approaching enemy, so that the massive gates might be closed and all should be secure within.

The king seems to have set much store to this city, and perhaps regarded it as the crowning work of his successful life.

First, Because of the favorable site upon which it was erected. Hence we hear him cry out, while the chords of his immortal harp are trembling with the sweetest melody, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."

He also valued this city on account of its impregnability. Thus, again, while pouring forth the music of the forty-eighth Psalm, we hear him exclaim, "Walk about Zion and go round about her: tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, that ye may tell it to the generations following." He goes on to say that when their enemies saw it, fear took hold upon them and they fled away.

Again: David loved this city, because the Ark of the Lord, which contained the decalogue, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod, which budded, were lodged in the midst thereof. Hence he says: "Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." No wonder that the devoted King of Israel boasted of this city. It was elevated. It was beautiful. It was impregnable, and above and beyond all, it was the dwelling place of the manifested presence of the ever blessed God. The cymbal of the divine glory was

here. Here the king prostrated himself in deep adoration, and made supplication unto the Lord; and here the Lord through Urim and Thummim gave signal answers to his prayers. No marvel, then, that in the fervor of his soul, he declares that he would "rather be a doorkeeper in the house of his God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." He asserts that "the Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than the dwellings of Jacob."

Though David talked and sang much of this place, we have abundant reason to believe that the cause was other than any undue attachment to things that were earthly in their nature. It seems to be more than intimated that he saw in this city, with a prophetic eye, an emblem of the Church of God in the oncoming history of the children of men. Hence the fire of his zeal was kindled upon prophetic altars.

But whatever may have been the sweet singer's view of this matter, we are quite sure that the evangelical prophet, Isaiah, so understood it. Here he is most certainly addressing the Church, when he exclai ns in language that is quite military in its spirit, "Awake! awake! put on thy strength, O Zion." As if he, from his height of vision, surveying the vast field of action, in the oncoming ages, had said, "Zion thy foes are martialing, and thou art slumbering unarmed and unclad. The foe is upon thee, Zion awake! awake! and immediately address thyself to the dreadful conflict which is before thee."

We come now to call attention to some points of analogy which exist between the "city of David" and the Church of Christ, in the world. We shall use the word Church in its extended sense, so as to imply all true believers who have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and have been made "partakers of the divine nature." Then, let us see what points of resemblance we may be able to find.

First, This "city of David" was an elevated city. It was "built upon a hill, and, hence, it could not be hid." In this direction, the Church is very beautifully and fitly represented. I know it will not readily be conceded, upon all hands, that the tendency and

influence of the Church, is to elevate all who come within the range of its power, in the scale of moral excellence. But we feel certain that no very lengthy train of argument will be required, to convince honest minds that such is even the case. To put this in a clear light, we mean only to appeal to a few facts, which come under the observance of almost every person. Who doubts, for a single moment, that a protracted course of transgression of physical, civil and moral law, brings upon the transgressor hopeless misery and degradation? If any are not convinced, let the certain signs of a disease-shattered system, read in the blanched cheek, the hollow retreating eyes, indicative of the ceaseless gnawings of the guilty conscience of the abandoned libertine, pour in their united testimony. If any doubt that a course of besotted intemperance will bring distress and ruin upon humanity, let the history of the inebriate speak, as he reels and swaggers along our streets, or freezes in the gutter. Follow him, while the apostle thunders forth the awful fact, that "no drunkard hath part in the kingdom of God." Let the pale, thin face of the scantily clad widow, and the hungry cry of the unfed orphan, tell the tale of dreary woe.

Now, what is known to be true, with reference to the classes here specified, is known, by observation and sad experience, to be equally and inevitably true with reference to all other classes, just in proportion to the ingratitude of their transgressions. If, then, it be true that a course of sin always brings wretchedness and woe, it must follow that an opposite course of conduct will bring about just the opposite results. Disobedience to the revealed command of God degrades and ruins, while obedience to God's truth elevates and saves; and this truth is lodged in the bosom of the Church, founded by the Lord Jesus Christ. Has infidelity ever attempted to produce a single instance where an individual obeyed the precepts of God and was not benefitted, whose sensibilities were not refined, whose views were not elevated, and whose soul was not peaceful and happy. The best and wises men, with which this world has ever been blessed,

were members of the church of Christ, and obeyed the word of God. Here it is perfectly safe to assert that the church founded upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, is the only true elevating influence known, whether we consider humanity as individuals, or as one grand total. Human ethics and human philosophy, unpurified by the Holy Ghost, never did and never could raise man, even to the heathens' ideal of moral excellency. But Christianity has fully met the sublimest expectations of its votaries. What has paganism accomplished, though it has tried under the most favorable circumstances, for more than forty centuries, to satisfy the earnest cravings of the immortal mind? For an answer to this question, turn and sweep the horizon of the flowery empire of China. Go walk through Japan, India, and benighted Africa, then tell us if the heathen systems of religion have not succeeded in well nigh sinking man below the brutes of the field? Has not sin, in fact, done nearly as much for its subjects in this country in which we have our homes? All Pagan systems lack the vitalizing principle which is inherent in Christianity. They appeal to the appetites and pander to the grossest passions of the human race, while Christianity proposes to transform man's very nature and make him a new creature in Christ Jesus the Lord. We are certain that not enough has been awarded to the influence of Christianity by the public mind, in this enlightened country of ours. To it belongs the honor of preparing us for every noble work which we have been able to accomplish.

For proof of the superiority of the influences of Christianity upon the public mind, let us for a moment compare ourselves, in a few aspects, with those nations whose God is not the Lord. Look, first, at the useful inventions found in Christian lands. While Hindoos, in order to cultivate their fields, simply disturb the surface of the ground with a rude piece of timber, for want of a better invention, we drive the fearless plowshear through our rich soil, either by the force of our trained animals, or by the almost irresist-

ible power of steam utilized for that purpose. While heathen travelers go on foot or ride on donkey or camel, or, at best, are wheeled along mud roads in a creaking ox cart, at the dreadful speed of three miles an hour, we lay our iron thoroughfares across a continent, and the brazen steed at our bidding, with muscles of steel and lungs of fire, wheels us through mountains, along the rivers and across the valleys, at the easy rate of forty miles an hour; and at the end of many hundred leagues still pants for the race. Our mighty ocean steamers have found their ways into the ports and rivers of China and Japan, and have beached the inferior awkward junks of those heathen nations. And thus we might continue the points of contrast indefinitely, pointing to the transmission of thought by the lightning wing, and still at every point exhibit our superior advantages over those of heathen countries. But what is the reason of this great difference. We answer, China builds Joss houses and sacrifices to devils—we rear churches and colleges, and worship the God of our fathers. While other nations degrade their women, giving them the place of the meanest slave, and teach, in their sacred books, that women have but simply a right to serve and not a spark of immortality, we reverence our mothers, protect our wives and sisters, educate our daughters, and assign them all a place in social society, more enviable than that occupied by ourselves. Now, I declare that whatever Christian nations have in common, that is more desirable than heathen nations, it is solely due to the influence of the church of Christ upon the public and individual mind.

Our inventions, our facilities for education, our refinements in a domestic and in a social sense, our qualifications for the enjoyment of the sublime, the good, the pure, and the beautiful—all these are easily traced to the power which Christianity exerts upon the human heart. Who then will say that the Church of Christ is not elevated and elevating in its influences?

The second point of resemblance to which attention is invited, is that of strength, or impregnability.

David builded this city with reference to the strength of his enemies, hence her majestic walls and stately towers. These walls were of goodly height, and at intervals the towers were situated upon which watchmen were stationed, who constantly surveyed the valleys of Gihon, Hinnom and Jehosaphat. These watchmen were charged with the safety of the city, in that it was their duty to give the alarm upon the approach of an enemy, even in the distance, so that the mighty gates might be closed, and all the people within might be secure. Now, it does seem strange that while the Church of Christ is constructed expressly for man's safety, yet she is now, as she ever has been, beset, on every side, by sworn inveterate enemies. But the Great Architect has reared her wall, in view of, and with reference to, this awful fact. Let us for one moment walk about this spiritual temple; let us mark well her bulwarks, and consider her splendid palaces, that we may tell it to the generations following.

All will admit that the most important thing for the perpetuity of a building, is the foundation. And what do we find here? Why, that this glorious superstructure is firmly planted upon the "Rock of Ages." "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation, and he that believeth shall not make haste."* Who has ever found a substitute for this foundation? Many have been sought out and tried, but still that saying of the apostle is true, that "no other foundation can any man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

"Dear name the rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding place,
My never failing treasure, filled
With boundless stores of Grace.

Having anchored the Church upon this foundation, to make her even more secure, God has thrown about her the everlasting arms of his promise in that he has declared that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. Empires, kingdoms, thrones and

*Isaiah xxviii: 16.

powers have arisen and successively followed each other into the mouldering scenes of the past. The incessant gnawing of the teeth of time has brought to dust the polished shaft and the symmetrical tower. The crushing weight of centuries has been wheeled over the sepulcher of buried magnificence. The nations have gazed and wondered much, while the thoughtful have often anxiously inquired, what will become of the Christian fabric, in the midst of these mighty changes? But they have ever hailed the fact that layer after layer, and story after story, it is still rising toward the grand and final completion.

I ask what can hell invent in the future, that its rage has not tried in the past? All its infernal powers have been laid under contribution, to destroy this blessed city of refuge; but in the midst of it all, like the Hebrews in the land of their enemies, the more she has been opposed and oppressed, the more rapidly she has gained strength and multiplied her hosts. Like the tree of liberty, the more it has been disturbed and shaken by adverse winds and storms, the deeper it has struck its roots into the hearts of the people. Until it now lifts its stately head, and promises soon to extend its protecting shade over all the earth. So the influence of the Church of Christ will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Again: This city was the dwelling place of the manifested presence of the great God of Israel. Here, the tabernacle was erected, which contained the Ark of the Covenant, and upon this Ark, between the cherubim, appeared the symbol of the divine glory. Oh! what a centre of interest was here. No wonder Israel's sweet singer exclaims, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." Here he found himself in the audience chamber of the great and holy One, where

> "Heaven came down his soul to greet,
> And glory crowned the mercy seat."

How his heart must have burned with sacred fire, when he said, "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." The tabernacle has decayed. The Ark has

long since been lost, and yet sometime it may be restored; but the true and living God still makes the Church the place of his abode. Here he has deposited the truth with his people, and has promised, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

What a blessing to this benighted world is the Church of Christ. Who can properly estimate its value? Strike it out of existence, and it would be far more disastrous to the human family, than if the natural sun were eliminated from his place in the sky.

Moral gloom, only faintly represented by the raven wings which hung around the land of Goshen, would be the inevitable and endless consequence. Then,

"Ah whither could we flee for aid,
When tempted, desolate, dismayed,
Or how the hosts of hell defeat,
Had suffering saints no mercy seat."

But let us "lift up the hands which hang down," and fling to the winds our needless fears, for God, who has founded and makes the Church the place of his own abode, has promised, "that of her increase there shall be no end," and "one jot nor one tittle of his word shall never pass until all be fulfilled."

Again: As watchmen of old were placed upon the high towers around Zion and the City of David, so that they might scan the hills and valleys in every direction, in order to give the alarm in case of an approaching enemy. So God calls men to the high places of Zion in the Church. What responsibility!

"Let Zion's watchmen all awake,
And take the alarm they give.
Now let them from the mouth of God,
Their awful charge receive."

And let them ever be faithful to sound the alarm in time of danger; and in large measure commit to their hands the safety of his cause. "Thus saith the Lord, I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel; therefore hear the words of my mouth and give them warning from me." What a calling is this, and who is able for these things? How fearful must be the retribution of that minister, who proves recreant to this high commission which he has received from God.

This text more than implies that, in the days of the prophet, Zion slumbered while she should have

watchful vigils kept. Hence Isaiah's earnest address, "Awake! Awake!!" Here is a source of great danger. The danger to the Church does not arise from a want of numbers, nor for a want of facilities or resources, nor yet for want of power. Her chief danger arises from her spirit of indifference. The giant does not lack for strength for his sure defense, but he needs to exert himself upon his foes. When was it that Samson was shorn of his great power? Was it while he was contending with his enemies in a hand to hand conflict? Nay, this only served to make even more iron-like the muscles of his brawny arms. He lost his strength while unconscious upon the lap of the deceitful Delilah. So the Church may become careless, under a conscious sense of her own mighty resources, and thus, while at least partially slumbering, her foes are forging chains, with which they hope to bind and lead her into a strange land of captivity.

Centuries have come and gone since the prophet put the trumpet to his lips, at the command of God, and blew the alarm of the text. Zion arose, put on her strength and swept forth to the field of conflict. The battle has been waging along the ages, with various apparent results. But as the years go by, the great plan of battle unfolds itself to the reverend and thoughtful mind. Many well fought fields have already been past, and the strength of Zion still remains, and the munitions of war are not yet exhausted. Even now she seems to be "coming up out of the wilderness leaning upon the arm of her beloved, clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." There may be many battles yet to fight; many more victories yet to win; but all the Church has to do, in order to final conquest and glorious triumph, is to obey the warning of this text. Be watchful—exert the strength which God supplies—put on, and keep her beautiful garments clean, and overwhelming defeat will be visited on every foe; and Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation, when the conflict is passed and the victory is won, will say to each and every soldier, "Come ye, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. Daniel H. K. Dix was born in Lewis—now Upshur—county, Virginia—now West Virginia—January 24, 1828. He was the fourth son of Isaac and Elizabeth Dix, plain, but well-to-do citizens of the "Old Commonwealth." After spending several years at home, in early youth, under district and private teachers, where he obtained a rudimentary mental training, he entered the Northwestern Virginia Academy at Clarksburg, and remained fifteen months. He was now a man, and employed every available moment of these fifteen months to the very best advantage. The result was, a fair understanding of his mother tongue, and a sufficient knowledge of mathematics, and the sciences, to enable him to continue his studies when he left the Academy. In this way, he succeeded in procuring, for that period, a liberal education.

Brother Dix's parents, during their entire married life, were religious, and all the while maintained "a family altar." To their uprightness and godly lives, the subject of this sketch acknowledges that he owes much, indeed everything, for his own straightforward course, and his devotedness to Christianity through more than forty years of subsequent life. Eternity alone can reveal the full extent and value of the parental example before the children in the household. We can realize, only in a very feeble manner, how profoundly this alone has affected the civilization of the age in which we live; and yet how silently has been its work in modifying, and in fact, changing the natures and characters of the young of every locality coming under its influence. How important, then, that all parents should allow no opportunity, either of precept or example, before their children, to pass unimproved.

At the age of sixteen, Brother Dix became religious; and at twenty-one he was licensed to preach. He entered the West Virginia Conference, at Parkersburg, in June, 1850. From that time to the present, he has done effective work, or rather has been on the "effective roll," with the exception of two years,—1866 and 67, when he was troubled with "clergyman's sore throat," which compelled him for a time to retire from active work.

Brother Dix has filled a number of important appointments in his Conference; was a member of the General Conference of 1876;

was four years a member of the General Missionary Committee of the Church, and has been Presiding Elder three terms. He is now traveling the Morgantown District.

While on the "sick list," Bro. Dix was elected to the West Virginia Senate, and served the people of this State four years ably and well. He was, to the personal knowledge of the writer, regarded as one of the clearest headed and most valuable members of the Senate. He refused a re-nomination for a second term, because it interfered with the ministry of the Word, which was his chosen life work.

Bro. Dix is one of the most earnest and devoted of the one hundred and sixty members of the West Virginia Conference. He is perfectly honorable and trustworthy, and his nature is almost as transparent as glass. He has been a long time in the work, and has left his impress upon the times in which he lived; and has not only won the hearts of the people in one locality, but is widely known and loved in every portion of the Conference.

"With him life's springtime's over,
And its autumn days have come;
Happy is the honest workman,
For he's sheaves to carry home:"

SERMON IX.

BY

REV. DANIEL H. K. DIX, P.E.

THEME:—WHY MOSES AND AARON WERE NOT PERMITTED TO ENTER THE PROMISED LAND.

TEXT:—And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and he was sanctified in them.—NUMBERS, xx: 12-13.

The history of Moses is of the most thrilling character. One cannot study the eventful life of the great Law Giver, without feeling that he was under the immediate direction of Divine Providence. A merciless decree to destroy all the male children of the Hebrews, had gone forth, and Moses fell under that decree; but God provided for his deliverance. He saved him by the daughter of the author of the wicked edict, which made so much sorrow in Israel.

By the direction of Divine Providence, Moses was educated by that fostering mother in the very courts of Pharoah, and in all the learning of Egypt. He arose to distinction in the Egyptian army, and commanded the forces against Ethiopia, returning from conflict with victory added to his already great renown. Before he would forsake the religion of his fathers, he stepped down from his lofty position of honor and trust, to the condition of a slave.

Because he vindicated the rights of one of his injured brethren, he was compelled to be a refugee in a strange land, but God soon called him to a different and more responsible life. He chose him to lead his people out of bondage and direct their footsteps toward the Promised Land—the land of their fathers. Now, proving to his brethren that God had chosen him, and, again, showing that the most wonderful miracles as proof that God was with him, and that God was directing their journeys. He exhibited patience through all the trials and difficulties of that most wonderful journey of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan; but after nearly forty years of patience and forbearance, by one single act he debarred himself from his long cherished hope of entering into the Promised Land.

One feels sad in contemplating this subject. We may well pause, and ask, in the language of one of the disciples, "Lord, are these few that be saved?" Only Caleb and Joshua enjoyed the high privilege of entering into the land of their fathers, of all of the adult males who left Egypt. Will only a like proportion of Christians reach their highest hopes, by entering Heaven, is a question of great moment?

I. WHAT WAS THE OFFENSE OF MOSES AND AARON.

In the investigation of this interrogative it is necessary to call up the circumstances which brought about the offense that proved so serious to the offenders. The children of Israel had journeyed from the wilderness of sin to Rephidim, and there being no water to be had, they murmered against their leaders. They said, "Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"

Moses went before the Lord and said, "What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me." "The Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand and go.

"Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

"And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?"*

"It must be remembered that in Numbers xx, Moses was commanded to speak to the "Rock" before the people, "and speak to the rock before their eyes."

Having given a brief historical statement of the case, we will now inquire into the offense. What was it? In Deuteronomy xxii, God charges Moses and Aaron with not having sanctified him before the children of Israel. He says: "Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel." This is all that we have which relates directly to the case. They stand charged with trespassing against God among the children of Israel, in that they did not honor him. One of the definitions of sanctify is to acknowledge his authority, and honor his majesty, and reverence his law. It is clear that they did not reverence his law, as they should have done, before his people. This is shown by the following facts:

1. Moses did not speak to the rock, as he was commanded to do. His first command was to smite the rock, but, when he was the second time spoken to, he was only to speak to the rock.†

2. Moses did not exhibit that spirit which should have honored God. He smote the rock twice, instead of speaking to the rock, or smiting it but once, as first directed. There is evidence of a purturbed spirit—a spirit that no one can indulge without violating God's law. The Psalmist said: "Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." Solomon said: "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous." Paul says: "Let all wrath be put away." James says:

*Exodus xvii:5, 6, 7. †Numbers xx:8.

"Let every man be slow to wrath." Again: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. We should fear, lest, like Moses and Aaron, we sin against God. How many foolishly commit sin by becoming angry.

3. Moses spoke unadvisedly: "Hear now, ye rebels." No doubt they were rebellious, but because they were was no reason why Moses should speak to them so harshly. How easily we may dishonor God, by using epithets in a reproachful manner towards our brethren.

4. He did not honor God in the miracle: "Must we fetch water out of the rock?" God had promised to stand upon the rock, and it would seem that, if Moses had been in the right spirit, he would have recognized God as the cause of the flow of water; but he smote the rock twice, as though by smiting the rock it would give forth water. God's ministers may do his bidding, but at the same time they may do it so that the glory will not be given to him. This seems to have been the case with the two servants, Moses and Aaron.

It is no small sin to withhold the glory from God. Herod was smitten because he did not give God the glory.

II.—GOD DOES NOT FORSAKE MEN BECAUSE THEY SIN, UNLESS THEY BECOME INCORRIGIBLE.

1. I am not proposing to enter a plea for sinning, but for the sinner. Many think that if they make a false step God forsakes them; that he casts them off forever. We do not want to discourage the wayward from coming back to their offended friend and Father. If we were without precept or example, such a conclusion might be reached. But since we have such declarations in the Divine Word as in Jeremiah iii: "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever." And again: "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you,"

all fear should be removed, all clouds should be driven away. How often God speaks in words of encouragement. He says by his servant, Malechi iii: 7: "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts." Yes, we come back to him. "He invites us to return. During all the years of Israel's waywardness, God pleaded with them, saying, "I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner."

Take the journey of the children of Israel as proof of his unwillingness to let the sinner die. How he convinced them by the awful demonstration of himself at Taberah, Numbers xvi: 42: "And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation, and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared." Now, had not God been as represented in his Holy Word, Exodus xxxiv:6,7: "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Israel would have been destroyed.

2. Take again as proof of God's forbearance the case of Moses. Though he did not honor God before the congregation; did not "sanctify him before the people," yet the Lord did not forsake him, nor did he remove him from before his people. He continued his communications with him until he took him from Nebo to his heavenly home.

We must not be understood as teaching that God winks at sin. Moses must have repented, for God could not have continued his communications with him. Though it is not so stated that he acknowledged his faults, yet it is clear that God does not hold such relations with sinners.

That Aaron sinned in the case of the Golden Calf, is very clear from Deut. ix: 20: "And the Lord was angry with Aaron to have destroyed him; and I prayed

for Aaron also the same time." Aaron is charged, also, with the same offense which was brought against Moses. He did not "sanctify the Lord before the people." Though he had offended grievously, yet God did not wholly forsake him. That Aaron humbled himself we readily infer from the fact, that the Lord did not destroy him, but that Moses prayed for him.

3. Take the case of David as another proof of the proposition, that God does not forsake the sinner, if he will hear him and be reproved. David sinned fearfully against God in the case of Uriah. While God could not hold his former close relations with him, yet he did not forsake him. He sent Nathan to reprove him, that he might be brought back to his offended God. The Prophet's lesson was so complete, that he saw his sin and exclaimed, "I have sinned against the Lord." Here we see clearly that he repented and confessed his sin. God said to him through his servant, "the Lord hath put away thy sins: thou shalt not die." God in his infinite mercy did not cut the offender off, but forgave him and continued with him. Surely we can say with the 2. Peter, iii, 9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

4. He did not forsake Hezekiah because of his imprudent conduct, in exposing all the glories of his house, to the Messengers from Babylon. Here, again, have we the proof that a merciful God does bear with offenders, though he is displeased with their conduct. We can see God's love for the offender, by the pointed rebuke by his faithful servant Isaiah. That Hezekiah repented is clear, from his answer to Isaiah, when he showed him the fearful results that were to befall the Children of Israel, and also his own house. He said in Isaiah xxxix, 8: "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken."

5. Christ often reproved his erring disciples, but did not cast them off. He said to Peter, "Thou art an offense unto me." Though Peter denied him, and even profanely denied him, he sent word to Peter that

he was risen: "Tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Gallilee: there ye shall see him as he said unto you." Peter could see him in Gallilee. He would not spurn him from his presence. Nor will God turn away the prodigal, if he repents and goes back to his father's house.

6. The churches, in chapter iii of Revelations, is another proof of his forbearance toward the wayward. How he showed them their follies and exhorted them to turn away from their sins.

Sinners should not despair, though they have sinned. The blessed promise is, "If ye return unto me I will return unto you."

Have we gone astray like the Prodigal, let us adopt his language, "I will arise and go to my father." In the beautiful language of Steele, let us go to our Heavenly Father, saying,

"How oft this wretched heart
Has wandered from the Lord;
How oft my roving thoughts depart,
Forgetful of his word.

"Yet mercy calls,—Return;
Savior, to thee I come;
My vile ingratitude I mourn;
O take the wanderer home!

"Thy love, so free, so sweet,
Blest Savior I adore;
O, keep me at thy secred feet,
And let me rove no more.

III. WE CANNOT WIPE OUT ALL THE EFFECTS OF SIN BY REPENTANCE.

If the impression should have found a hold in any heart, that we may, by one single act of repentance, wipe away sin with all its effects, such an one would do well to stop and examine this question carefully. While we admit that sin may be pardoned, we strongly contend that its effects are not all destroyed. A person may lead a very profligate life, and repent at the last and be forgiven. God in his infinite mercy, may save him and take him home to heaven, yet he will feel the effects of sin through all the balance of his life in his broken and abused constitution. To pardon sin, is not to restore health. It will not bring

back the robust constitution once enjoyed, but now enfeebled, and infected by debauchery.

We know that persons have been forgiven, but die of the disease brought about by their gross sins. Years of suffering may follow a pardoned sinner, and yet, at the last he may go down to death by the very disease brought upon him by profligacy. Hence, the proposition is clear, that repentance and pardon do not destroy all the results of sin.

We may go further, and assume that sin largely destroys our success in this life. How many fortunes have been squandered by turning aside from the right? Many who have started well have gone out into the world with Christian motives, and with a Christian heart, but turned aside, it may be, through powerful alurements, until, like the prodigal, they have wasted their goods with riotous living. At last when in hunger and rags, they turn to God and are forgiven, they do not find their goods restored. Though forgiven, it does not bring back their fortunes.

We may go still further and apply it to the subject of religion. We may be pardoned, but it does not leave us before the Christian world as before. Our sins become a fact of history, and nothing that we can do will change that history. We may be called good, yes we may be good, and yet the history remains. It will cause others to hold such an one with more or less suspicion. The history is there. He did so once, he will do so again, says the world.

When a man violates the laws of his country, and is brought to justice and imprisoned to meet the demands of the law, until justice is satisfied, he goes out again into the world, but the fact of his having met the demands of his conviction, does not answer. The fact still remains that he had been an offender, and can never be wiped out. Paul claimed that he was a sinner, but was saved by grace. Still the fact remained that he had been a sinner.

We may have remorse while we live, because of some act done, that has gone beyond our control. We may take the life of some one and be pardoned like the thief, but that does not bring back the life we have de-

stroyed. It will not restore the stricken wife her husband, and the children their father again, nor will it bring back to the parents their child who has been taken away. It is not possible for us to be so pardoned as to forget all the effects of sin. We may in the bitterness of our souls say like one of old, "Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the sins of my youth."

3 It may defeat our highest possible attainments in our Christian work. Moses did not reach the goal for which he started—the Promised Land. It is expressly said, "Because ye believe me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." Neither Moses nor Aaron was permitted to enter the Promised Land. "Aaron shall be gathered unto his people; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah." Numbers xx: 24. Moses was taken upon Nebo and permitted to see the land, but could not reach the goal. "Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession. And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people."†

How sad one feels while entertaining this subject. Moses the meek, the patient servant of God, who had endured so much persecution and suffering, should at last fall short of his reward. We have no doubt that many have failed to reach the highest honor, because of disobedience. They like Moses may be saved at last, but how much they have irreparably lost through unfaithfulness. If such were the result in this life, what must be the result in the future? Shall we not fear that much shall be lost in heaven? We are to be rewarded according to our works. Broken links in the chain of our history will not be united again in heaven. There will be much that will be lost.

† Deut. xxii: 59, 50.

God took from Moses and Aaron the glory of leading the people over into the Promised Land. So much of the Christian honor which God gives, may be lost, by some sin that may blur our Christian character. It was the greatest pleasure of St. Paul, in his last hours, that he had fought a good fight; that he had finished his course. He had made no false steps. Let us, like Charles Wesley, who so beautifully expresses it, say,

"I the good fight have fought—
O when shall I declare!
The vict'ry by my Savior got,
I long with Paul to share.

"O may I triumph so,
When all my warfare's past:
And, dying, find my latest foe
Under my feet at last.

"This blessed word be mine,
Just as the port is gain'd,—
Kept by the power of grace divine,
I have the faith maintain'd."

We conclude, from the foregoing thoughts, that it is dreadful to sin; that its results are far reaching, therefore sin should be avoided. Adam and Eve had no paradise after their sin. Cain was a vagabond on the earth. Jacob had a cup full of sorrow. Moses and Aaron lost the privilege of leading the people over the Jordan, into the Promised Land. The sword was never to depart from the house of David. Hezekiah's children were to be carried into Babylon. If these most faithful servants of God realized such awful results for their sins, what must be the consequences of those that sin every day? May God help us to live without sin.

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. Thomas B. Hughes, son of Francis T. and Phoebe Hughes was born in Fayette county, Virginia, now West Virginia, January 20, 1836. At the age of sixteen, after nine months of strug, gling, he experienced a satisfactory conversion, and united with the M. E. Church. At eighteen he was licensed to exhort, and at twenty, he was licensed as a local preacher. In 1857 he was received into the West Virginia Conference on trial, at the Conference session held at Moundsville. His first work was Calhoun Circuit. Subsequently he served the Church in Glenville, Spencer, West Union, Middlebourne, Mouddsville, Triadelphia, North Street and Zane Street Churches, Wheeling, and Cameron. Also Buckhannon District as Presiding Elder, Chapline Street Church, Wheeling, and Morgantown station, where hn is now preaching acceptably to a large and intelligent congregation.

Brother Hughes is a man of fine presence ; is a good preacher and is fully and entirely consecrated to the work of his ministry. His pastorates are efficient and successful, and always promote the work of the Church. By his zeal and real worth, he never fails to stimulate and encourage the people to their noblest endeavors in the cause of Truth.

He was chosen as the senior representative from the West Virginia Conference to the General Conference of the Church, which was held in Cincinnati in May, 1880, and was an efficient representative. Brother Hughes commands the confidence and esteem of all who know him, both in and out of the Church.

SERMON X.

BY

REV. THOMAS B. HUGHES.

THEME:—ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

TEXT:—"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly."—1 Thess. v: 23.

Justification is a work done for us; regeneration is a work accomplished in us. The first changes our relation to God, and the latter changes our moral nature. Regeneration is the basis of entire sanctification, and, therefore, occupies the same relation to it that the foundation does to the building—the one is the beginning and the other is the completion of salvation from sin.

I.—WHAT IS IT TO BE WHOLLY SANCTIFIED?

It does not consist in being delivered from affliction. Sin, indeed, is the primary cause of all sufferings. God does, however, permit some of the consequences of sin to linger about us after we are delivered from sin, properly, so called.

While it is probable that a large measure of human suffering is the result of personal transgression, we are not, therefore, to conclude that those who attain this high state of grace are lifted above the unholy influences of sin in this life. Christ, the "spotless Lamb of God," was a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and "the servant is not above his Lord." Neither are the wholly sanctified delivered from temptation. Along the line of temptation, sin, as to the

overt act, commences where the will consents, but sin may exist in the inclination toward the temptation, where no overt act has been committed. Those who are made pure in heart are saved from evil inclinations, and the false leanings of the soul; hence the temptations of the fully saved do not come from within, but from without. God's holiest people can not expect, on earth, exemption from external temptation, nor will they ever be out of gun-shot of the devil in any state of grace which is possible in this world. We do not maintain that when we reach the experience of entire holiness it will be impossible to relapse into sin. It may safely be affirmed that the more grace we have, the easier it is to keep that which we possess, and that the majority of Christians live too near the border line between the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness. The probabilities of falling diminish every step the child of God takes toward heaven, but the possibility of apostacy will exist as long as we are in a state of probation. It is said that a ball passing from the earth to the sun would reach a point where the attraction toward the sun would be greater than toward the earth. So the Christian, passing up the scale of moral being, may reach a point where the tide of his moral nature will run so strongly Godward that the heavenly gravitation will be stronger than that which is earthward. In such a state, there may not be much probability of relapsing into sin, yet the possibility will doubtless still exist. It does not make those who attain it absolutely perfect. Absolute perfection is that to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken. No Christian on earth, and no redeemed spirit or angel in heaven can be said to be absolutely perfect.

There is sufficient moral distance between all created beings and the infinite Creator for them to be eternally rising in the scale of being, and yet ever be inferior to him. Those who are fully saved from sin are not, because of this, saved from infirmities and mistakes in judgment. We can no more be infallible than we can be omniscient. What, then, is entire

sanctification? Bishop Foster defines it thus: "We believe it a Christian privilege to attain to a state in which he will be entirely free from sin, properly, so called, both inward and outward; a state in which he will do no act involving guilt; in which the entire outward man of the life and the entire inward man of the heart will be pure in the sight of God. It is not said that evil and vicious suggestions will not be made to the heart in such a state, but both, that there will be no outward compliance, nor inward sympathy with the suggestions."

II.—HOW MAY IT BE ATTAINED?

We answer, by consecration and faith. Consecration has a negative and a positive part: The first refers to that which must be forsaken, and the reformation must be complete up to the light possessed at the time, and must thereafter keep pace with the increase of light, which makes manifest that which is sinful. The positive part is what the soul must consent to do. As long as there is an unwillingness to do all that the soul sees and believes to be duty, the consecration is imperfect, and this imperfection will surely prevent the reception of the blessing.

But it may be asked: "What is the difference between the consecration necessary to justification, and that which is necessary to entire sanctification?" In most particulars it is the same; but in some respects there is quite a difference. The first consecration is made with a view to pardon and adoption, simply; the second is with a view to entire deliverance from the defilement of sin. The powers of the soul first consecrated were not quickened, but in the second they are already quickened by regenerating grace, and a living sacrifice is made to God. The second is more extensive than the first, because the light possessed is so much greater than before. With the increase of light new sins are discovered and new duties made known, and the consecration, once complete up to the light possessed, must now include much that it did not before in order to be perfect.

The faith necessary to its attainment must include a clear conviction that the necessary provision has been made, and that God is able, willing and ready to accomplish the work now. "Added to this," says Mr. Wesley, "there must be a divine conviction that he doeth it now." Again, he says: "Faith is the condition, and the only condition of sanctification exactly as it is in justification. No man is sanctified until he believes; every man, when he believes, is sanctified." He adds: "It is important to observe that there is an inseparable connection between these three points. Expect it by faith, expect it now, and expect it as you are. To deny one of them is to deny them all." The faith necessary to justification, and that which is necessary to entire sanctification, is the same in the abstract, but in the objects upon which faith is fixed there is a difference. The object of the penitents' faith is pardon and adoption, but the believer, seeking the higher life, has a clear apprehension of deliverance from inbred sin as a present privilege, and his faith grasps that. The commands, prayers, and promises of God's Word all clearly prove that this great grace is received instantaneously by faith. Very many of the hymns in our collection, written by Charles Wesley and others, teach the same great truth, and the experience of those who have attained free salvation, corroborates the same.

III.—SHOULD ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION BE MADE A SPECIALTY? THAT IS, SHOULD SPECIAL EFFORTS BE MADE TO PROMOTE IT?

We shall not hesitate to take the affirmative of this question.

1. We think we can see the necessity of making special efforts to promote its experience now, because for a number of years the Church seemed, to a considerable extent, to have lost sight of this great distinguishing doctrine of Methodism; hence, when the subject began to be agitated within a few years past, the people, in many localities, thought the doctrine entirely new. Many knew nothing of its nature, or how and when it was to be attained. Some under-

stood, believed, and endeavored to live it, but many blindly opposed it. The masses need more light on the subject; hence the propriety of special efforts to give them the necessary instruction, and also to promote its experience.

2. The work is special in itself, and, therefore, special efforts should be made for its attainment. Regeneration and entire purity are the same, perhaps, in kind, but differ in degree, and this distinction has been clearly recognized by the standard writers of Methodism. Mr. Watson, in his Institutes, part 2, p. 450, says: "We have already spoken of justification, adoption, regeneration and the witness of the Holy Spirit and we proceed to another as distinctly marked and as graciously promised in the Holy Scriptures; this is entire sanctification." He adds: "That a distinction exists between a regenerate state, and a state of entire and perfect holiness, will be generally allowed." The views of many others might be given, but we forbear. The nature of this distinction is clearly shown by a recent writer, as follows: "In regeneration sin does not reign, in sanctification it does not exist. In regeneration sin is suspended, in sanctification it is destroyed. In regeneration, irregular desires, anger, pride, unbelief, envy, &c., are subdued; in sanctification, they are removed. Regeneration is salvation from the voluntary commission of sin, sanctification is salvation from the being of sin. Regeneration is the old man bound; sanctification is the old man cast out and despoiled of his goods. Regeneration is sanctification begun, entire sanctification is the work completed." We should be careful not to confound Christian purity with Christian maturity. The one is the removal of impurity from the soul, and the other is the continued development of the graces, which may go on more rapidly after the attainment of purity, than before. If, then, entire sanctification in its nature is special, the means for its attainment may be special.

3. The Disciples, by direction of Christ, made it a specialty. "Tarry ye at the city of Jerusalem till ye are endued with power from on high," was the divine

command. Were the Apostles unconverted men at the time this command was given? We think not. On this point, Rev, William Arthur, in the "Tongue of Fire," page 46, says: "The Apostles had doubtless received the Spirit in some measure, before the day of Pentecost; for our Lord had breathed upon them immediately after his resurrection, and said, 'receive ye the Holy Ghost,' yet in the time which intervened between that and Pentecost, whatever might have been the advancement of their spiritual condition, beyond what it was before, it rested far behind that which immediiately followed upon the baptism of fire. It was then that they were filled with the Holy Ghost." Therefore, if the Apostles tarried at Jerusalem, waiting specially for the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, surely we may do the same.

IV. WE COME NOW TO CONSIDER SOME OF THE OBJECTIONS TO ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

These are numerous and many of them seemingly plausible. The first we notice is, that so many of the great minds of the church do not believe it, and manyhave lived respectable, pious and useful lives, and were not particularly exercised about entire holiness.

"This objection," says Bishop Foster, "is apparently strong, but really feeble, because it carries the doctrine to an improper tribunal, and it brings incompetent evidence." It is not a question dependent on human opinion, however learned and worthy of credit, for the Word of God is the only rule of faith and practice. Therefore the real question is, not whether great and good men believe it, but does God teach it; if so, we should look above all human teachers, to the only infallible one, to decide this and all other doctrines of faith. Another objection is, that it does not accord with the experience of the Church, for very few have ever even professed it, and they were probably mistaken. This objection is not an appeal to experience, but to non-experience, because it refers to what the Church has not attained, and not to that it has experienced. Would we say, because the sinner

has not experienced regenerating grace, that it is therefore impossible, surely not. Before we can claim anything for this objection, growing out of what it is assumed the Church has not experienced, we must first demonstrate that it believes, enjoys, and does all that is possible. Is not the very opposite of this true? As long as the Church is below privilege, it will be unsafe to conclude that because entire sanctification has not been experienced, that, therefore, it is impossible. It is not true, however that there are no witnesses of this great grace. Some have lived, some are still living, and we verily believe many more will live. "Witnesses for Jesus when sin in them is all destroyed."

The next objection is, that many profess it, who do not give sufficient evidence of its possession. This, alas, is too true; but it does not affect the doctrine in question. We fear that there are some sincere persons who live without a positive assurance of their justification, for months, and even years, and when they become convinced of the possibility of obtaining perfect love, they begin at once to seek it, without the proper instruction respecting the necessity of justification as the basis of entire sanctification. When such persons obtain justification it is so far superior to anything they have ever enjoyed before that they misname it, and call it entire purity, when they have nothing more than regeneration.

One of the greatest difficulties in the way of promoting the experience of Christian holiness is the failing to understand that ordinarily, if not invariably, a positive assurance of justification is necessary in order to be successful in seeking full salvation. But if we were to admit that nine out of every ten, who make a profession of this great grace, are mistaken, or insincere, it would not follow that the doctrine is untrue. It would only prove that nine out of every ten are not what they profess to be, but the doctrine would still stand, or fall on its own merits.

It is also urged that presenting entire sanctification as a distinct work, disparages regeneration. If any of the advocates of holiness have spoken lightly

of regeneration, which is really a great blessing and worthy of its Divine Author, we cheerfully unite with those who make this objection, in condemning such teaching, and, in turn, ask them to agree with us, when we affirm that the extravagance of some who espouse the cause of holiness, is no argument against the doctrine. A recent writer answers this objection as follows: "Does the teacher disparage the alphabet by urging the pupil to leave it and proceed to combine letters into syllables, syllables into words, words into sentences; and sentences into discourses? Does the architect disparage his foundation by leaving it to erect a beautiful superstructure thereon?" If not, then these objections are not well founded.

Many seem to think that to insist upon those in a regenerate state to seek entire purity, is calculated to produce dissatisfaction with their present enjoyment. If this objection is well founded, then it would follow that to teach the new-born babe, that spiritual manhood is far superior to spiritual childhood, would be followed by evil consequences, or to dwell in glowing terms upon the beatitudes of the heavenly world, is calculated to produce dissatisfaction with the inferior enjoyments of this life. But if presenting entire purity as a blessing much greater than justification, does produce some degree of spiritual depression, and thereby cause some to leave the wilderness and go over into the Canaan of perfect love; who will object?

In conclusion, we would say that holiness is the great want of the Church, to give a superior relish for spiritual things, to give stability to Christian character, to supply the proper motive power for a useful life, to give the necessary unction to impress the irreligious and bring them to the feet of Jesus. "A holy church would soon make a holy world. Heaven is but a standing monument of its glory, and hell of its necessity."

PERSONAL SKETCH.

In the good, old county of Preston, West Virginia, where the Allegheny mountains lift their summits toward the skies, on November 3, 1833, Rev. Joseph B. Feather was born. His parents, Adam and Sabra Feather, were of German extraction, and were well to do citizens of Northwestern Virginia. They were members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and in it, Joseph, the subject of this sketch, was baptized and brought up. When he was about seventeen years of age, he attended a revival meeting, carried on by the Methodists, near his home, and was converted. Shortly afterwards, he was licensed as an exhorter—having connected himself with the Methodist denomination—and at once took a leading part in Sunday School and other public religious services.

In those days, schools were scarce, but Bro. Feather pursued his studies closely; and by the time he was eighteen years of age, he was himself prepared to teach, and began the business of teaching the young in the public schools—if such they could be called. He taught for two years, but the while was preparing himself for the ministry, as he had satisfied himself fully that he had received the divine call to that great work.

January 1st, 1853, at the age of twenty, full of energy, life and hope, he was licensed to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. This authority was received from the hands of the well known Rev. H. Z. Adams, who has preached in almost every portion of what now comprises the territory of West Virginia.

Brother F.'s first Circuit was Barbour county, which he traveled as a "supply," with Rev. R. L. Brooks as preacher in charge. Having served his two years "on trial," he was admitted to the Conference in June, 1854, and sent to Glenville Circuit, with W. L. Hindman, as senior preacher. The two years following, he traveled Fork Lick and Charleston Circuits respectively, and his efforts on both of them were crowned with abundant success.

In April, 1857, he and Miss Mary Atkinson, of Kanawha county, were united in marriage. Their union was a happy one, as they were devoted to each other, and bore the burdens of life as one. His kind and affectionate wife died June 11, 1881, in the triumphs of a living faith. Brother Feather in writing to me concerning the death of his companion, among other things said, "She was a great comfort to me, and was a valuable assistant in bearing the burdens of a ministerial life."

In addition to those already given, Bro. Feather filled the following appointments: Buffalo Circuit, one year; Monticello Mission, one year; Winfield Circuit, two years; Blacksville Circuit, two years; Monongalia Circuit, two years; Grantsville Circuit, two years; Brandonville Circuit, two years; Marshall Circuit, two years; Hartford City Station, two years; Evansville Circuit, one year. On account of feeble health, he took a superanuated relation; but in the middle of the year, he was sent to Wesley Chapel, Wheeling, by Rev. Franklin Ball, D.D., the Presiding Elder of the Wheeling District. During the time of his pastorate there, he had a grand revival, which about doubled the membership of the station.

Owing to the failing health of his wife, and at his own request, he was sent to Palatine, a small Circuit in the interior of the Conference, where he remained three years. From there he went to Pruntytown, where he served one year. Next, he went to Marion Circuit, and remained one year. His last appointment is Pleasant Hill Circuit, where he has been for two years, doing an earnest work for the Master.

Bro. Feather is a plain, earnest, faithful Gospel preacher. He is unassuming—bashful. He never sought a good appointment, nor would he allow any one to do anything looking to his advancement, if in his power to prevent. His rule has always been to go wherever sent, accept the situation, and do his best to spread the Truth among the people. Strange as it may seem, yet it is true, because the writer knows the man, he always preferred circuit to station work. He enjoyed the work of moving among the people, and encouraging them to holy and upright lives. His has not been a brilliant life, but like the deep river, his course has been silent, steady, onward.

SERMON XI.

BY

REV. JOSEPH B. FEATHER.

THEME—THE HALF HAS NOT BEEN TOLD.

TEXT:—"It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not the words until I came and mine own eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me."—II. Chron. IX: 5, 6.

Several things have been conjectured with regard to the visit of this illustrious queen to the Jewish court. Some think she was actuated by idle curiosity. Others believe, and not without reason, that she was prompted by even lower motives. The narrative says, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions.

Whether she was Pagan or Jewess, she had heard of the fame of Israel's King, and of the dealings of the Lord with his chosen people. What she had heard created a desire to know more. There were questions with which her active mind found difficulty. So she was willing to go a great distance, at great expense, to find the true answers to these questions. She determined to know the truth of the "reports" she had heard, and, if possible, to know more than the wisest and most faithful messenger could communicate.

When her hard questions were answered, and the wisdom of Solomon was exhibited, she was overcome with surprise. And when the order, wealth and splendor, which were seen about his home, his throne and his temple were presented to her gaze, "there was no

more spirit in her." She could hardly sustain this scene of wonders. Recovering herself she said, "It was a true report that I heard," "but the half was not told me." I suppose it was true Solomon was a very wise man. The grandeur of his reign has never had a parallel among kings. Even the gifted queen under the inspiration of the occasion, seemed unwilling to try her powers of description. She believes, concurs, confesses, and carries back to her distant home, the rich fruitage of the best investment she had ever made.

Many years after these noted characters had passed away, the great Teacher said to the unbelieving Jews that this same "queen of the south" shall rise up in judgment, with the men of this generation, and condemn them, for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." So, it is the privilege and duty of the men and women of this generation to examine and enjoy the higher and purer characteristics of Christ's spiritual kingdom; for He "hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Now we can study the exhibitions and lllustrations of divine wisdom, as seen in the work of man's redemption. We can follow the armies of our Immanuel in their conflicts and achievements. We can number thousands of strange coincidences in the history of the Church, and of individual members of the Church, which challenge our admiration. We can stop anywhere and read inscriptions that are written on the monuments that mark the pathway of a progressive and increasing host. But when we enter the inner courts of this spiritual temple and examine the beauties and wealth that cluster around its holy altars, we find human language too tame to do the subject justice. There are many evidences to establish the truth of the Christian religion, but the best evidence which one can have on this subject, is his or her own experience. We are not expected to deal exclusively in theories. The Gospel has its doctrines, its examples, its precepts, and its promises, all blending in glorious harmony, and are intended to show us the way, and act as stepping

stones to bring us to the Author of our salvation. And to know him and enjoy his peaceful presence is the end of all knowledge and the fullness of perfect joy. This is ths substance, and all earthly substance its shadow. For this the great Apostle of the Gentiles counted all things but loss. What is art, or science, or learning, compared with the knowledge which comes from a vital union with Christ? How dim their light is until it becomes radiant by the light of the Cross. The greatest of the earthly great, the greatest ever born of woman, Solomon not excepted, is not only less than Christ, but less than the least in the Kingdom of God. The humblest Christian in this world, unknown it may be beyond the limits of his family circle, has attained to a knowledge far above all worldly wisdom. All things are so intimately connected with the work of the Cross, that if this had failed, creation itself, and all the types and figures which preceded the coming of the Messiah, would have proved failures also. So if we fail knowing Christ crucified, fail to make the pilgrimage to the temple in which dwells the One who is greater than Solomon, all other efforts, and all other knowledge, are vain. Unbaptised Philosophy is madness; baptized unbelief is sin and death.

This scheme of human redemption is but half told, because we can only see it through a glass darkly. Even the sanctified believer's view of redemption is, in some respects, imperfect. It is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." By that celestial guide we are led to the Cross, and, by the way of the Cross, to the rich experiences of a consecrated life. From that holy spot the humble worshipper looks over the far-reaching fields of revelation, and with his telescope of faith, beholds wondrous things. Yet how much there is that lies beyond the utmost sweep of his trusting faith. One of the greatest scholars in the Divine mysteries, confessed that he knew but in part, and all who reach the greatest attainments confess that they know but little.

"For now, as through the artist's intervening glass
Our eye observes the distant planets pass,
A little we discover, but allow
That more remains that art can show;
So whilst our mind its knowledge would improve,
(Its feeble eye intent on things above),
High as we may lift our reason up,
By Faith directed and confirmed by Hope,
Yet we are able only to survey
Dawnings of beams and promises of day.
Heaven's fuller effluence mocks our dazzled sight;
Too great its swiftness and too strong its light:
But soon the mediate clouds shall be dispelled;
The sun shall then be face to face beheld,
In all his robes with all his glory on,
Seated sublime on his meridian throne."

The light is increasing. That which was dim, and dimly seen through the types of Solomon's time, is now being revealed through Jesus Christ. As I look at the evidences of man's determination to go beyond the lines of his past discoveries, I wonder that so few are found who are willing to put their barks into this broad sea. I am sure our indifference is offensive to God, and grieves his spirit. An incident in the life of the great George Whitefield forcibly illustrates this truth. Near the close of one of his impressive sermons, he made a solemn pause, and then said: "The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold and ascend to heaven. And shall he ascend and not bear with him the news that one sinner among all this multitude is reclaimed from the error of his ways?" To give greater force to his words, he stamped with his foot, raised his hands and his eyes to heaven, and, with gushing tears, cried aloud, "Stop, Gabriel! stop, Gabriel! stop, ere ye enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God." The infidel, Hume, heard these burning words, but walked away without giving his heart to God, and, in all probability, never felt as much like doing so again. In like manner many to whom the blessed Savior sends us with the message of salvation, treat the subject with cold and heartless indifference.

"The half has not been told." We cannot divine the wonders of salvation. We may describe in glowing colors the scenes in nature and the works of art around us, but we cannot draw faithful pictures of

the Valley of Repentance. We can never tell the bitterness of "the wormwood and the gall," nor the darkness of the dark hour that precedes the hour of deliverance. We would hardly undertake to tell all about the "hunger" and "thirst" that penitent sinners and humble Christians both endure and enjoy as stepping-stones to the fullness of righteousness in Christ. Human language will never be competent to fully portray the struggles of a trembling faith to find something in the promises on which to stand, while all other hopes pass away forever, nor of its victories as it stands and rejoices in the full assurance of the Gospel. And then

> "Tongue can never express
> The sweet comforts and peace
> Of a soul in its earliest love,"

Nor press into the limits of a short lifetime the happy experiences of the Christian pilgrim as he passes up the shining highway of holiness to his home in the skies.

There is nothing to which we can compare these spiritual and heavenly things. Comparisons are made, but they all fail to reach the reality. The sun breaking through the clouds and flooding the earth with light; the day chasing away the darkness of the night; waking from a long and exhausting sleep; rising from the grave and bounding into a vigorous life, and being born again, are familiar expressions by which experimental religion is illustrated; but all of them put together fail to fully show its completeness.

The vision of grandeur enjoyed by the happy queen at Solomon's court was too much for her spirit and nerves; but what was that in comparison with the grandeur of that spiritual kingdom which is foreshadowed by our theme? Some people think we make too much noise about religion, but I do not believe that we make enough. There may be false and hollow professions, which are loud only for the sake of noise, but when true and earnest Christians learn to invoice their spiritual possessions as carefully as they do their worldly wealth, they will rejoice

with exceeding joy, and the long-prayed-for day of the Lord will then soon be ushered in.

In the volume of inspiration there are descriptions given of future blessedness suited to our present faculties; some of these are so beautiful that the finite mind can soar no higher. The crowns of glory, the streets of gold, the gates of pearl, the walls of Jasper, the crystal river, the living fountains, the company of angels, the harps, and the songs of triumph. These figures of speech are imperfect representatives of heaven.

> "The wide and unbounded prospect lies before us,
> But shadows, clouds and darkness rest upon it."

The day is coming, and to some it is not far distant, when hope will die in full fruition, and faith will be swallowed up in sight. Then we shall meet our blessed Savior and the loved ones with whom we parted at Jordan's brink, and see them in the clear radiance of heaven. Then we shall comprehend "with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God."

My prayer is that the writer of these lines and all who may read them may ultimately rise from these "shadowy visions" to the substantial realities and deathless joys of heaven.

PERSONAL SKETCH.

The Rev. Samuel E. Steele was born in Washington county, Pennsylvania, February 19, 1832. He was the fifth heir of William and Jane Steele. There were nine children in all, and they are all living except the eldest sister, who died in 1856. His father departed this life April 14, 1844, but his mother still survives.

The subject of this sketch was converted and connected himself with the M. E. Church in October, 1850, under the labors of Reverends Woodruff and Clagg, in Salem Church, Washington county, Pa. It was here that the arrow of conviction first pierced his young heart; but the balm of Gilead was applied, and he was enabled to exclaim with the famous author of "Night Thoughts":

> "With joy, with grief, the healing hand I see,
> That formed the skies, and yet that bled for me,
> That bleeds the balm I want."

His elder brothers, having married and gone from home, when the father died, the care of the farm, and the family, as well, largely fell to Bro. Steele. He was yet young, but possessed of industry and a robust constitution, he was well fitted for the task before him. Here he labored for two years, and then entered Bethany College, not far from Wheeling, where he began the studies of the regular course preparatory for the ministry, which profession he felt it his duty to enter. But the transposition from hard work on the farm to hard study in school, was too great, and the result was ruined health; so, in the spring of 1852 he returned to the farm to regain his strength or die, as many thought he would. This terminated his college course; but after a while he grew strong again, and for four years engaged in school teaching in his native county, among his kindred and friends.

October 12, 1855, Bro. Steele married Miss Mary Lee, second daughter of John and Mary Lee, of Marshall county, West Virginia. In March, of the next year, he received from the hand of Rev. William Lynch, Presiding Elder of the Wheeling District, license as a local preacher, and in April, 1857, with sixteen other young men, he was admitted to the West Virginia Conference. Most of Bro. Steele's classmates are still living, but some have fallen asleep. Among the latter I mention Rev. G. W.

Richmond, D. D., of precious memory—one of the purest men, and best preachers I ever knew. He died young, and his pure spirit went to the land

> "Where saints of all ages in harmony meet,
> Their Savior and brethren transported to greet;
> While anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
> And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."

Bro. Steele is just in the prime of life; but when he thinks of the numbers about him these twenty years, who have fallen in the fight, I do not wonder that he realizes

> "The years are rolling on."

The different posts of duty to which Bro. Steele, in the course of his ministerial life, has been assigned, are as follows: Spencer Circuit, two years; Elizabeth, two years; Middlebourne, two years; Sistersville, three years; Harrisville, three years; Guyandotte, three years; Hartford City, two years; Charleston District, as Presiding Elder, four years, and Huntington, one year. He was transferred to the Kentucky Conference about two years ago, and was stationed at Ashland, Ky., where he is now ministering to a faithful and zealous people.

During these years of toil in the Master's vineyard, about two thousand souls have been converted under Bro. Steele's preaching and added to the church. He has been a faithful, efficient and earnest minister of the Word. He preaches well—often with great power. I have heard him move large congregations to tears. May he live long to call men to repentance, and at last, when the great battle is fought, may he hear the welcome applaudit:

> "Servant of God, well done!
> Thy glorious warfare's past,
> The battle's fought, the race is won,
> And thou art saved at last,"

SERMON XIII.*

BY

REV. SAMUEL E. STEELE.

THEME :—CHRIST'S GOSPEL.

TEXT:—For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."—Romans i: 16.

"Observation teaches us, that from some cause or other, a large majority of the human race are ashamed of Christ and his Gospel. For, out of fourteen or fifteen millions of the race, less than three hundred millions, even, profess to believe in Jesus. Then, when we remember that of this number, a majority are only nominal Christians; and while they may have, to some extent, the form of godliness, they are destitute of the power of heartfelt religion.

Again: Many who are religious, apparently, while surrounded by religious influences, fail to stand firmly by their Master, when adverse circumstances are brought to bear upon them. They are seemingly carried with the multitude to do evil, and thereby deny Christ, or are found ashamed, to be called his followers. Not so, however, with the author of our text; for, after his conversion at Damascus, he was not only anxious to preach the Gospel in that city, but in Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, and Jerusalem also. He even expressed a strong desire (chap. 15 and 22) to visit his friends in Rome, who believed in Christ, and

*Preached at Union Camp Meeting, near Louisa, Ky., October 16, 1881.

to preach Jesus and the resurrection, to the inhabitants of that great Metropolis of the world, to unfurl the Gospel banner high in air, with that motto which all the ages should adopt: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." The first thought claiming our attention is

I. THE TERM "GOSPEL."

This term means a revelation of the grace, or favor, of God to fallen man through a mediator; including the whole scene of salvation, as revealed by the patriarchs and prophets, by Jesus Christ and his apostles, and is called the Gospel of God.* It is thus named because it comes from God, and is accompanied by the influence of God's Spirit.

Again: It is called "the Gospel of the Kingdom," because it treats of the kingdom of grace, and points out the way to the kingdom of glory. In short, the Gospel embraces the whole of God's will concerning man, as set forth in the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

The term "Gospel" also means the history of the Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded by each of the evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; for each contains a complete history of Jesus—of his miraculous conception, of his birth, life, miracles, death, burial, resurrection and ascension. It likewise reveals to man a future state—a place of perpetual and uninterrupted happiness; and also a place of misery, sorrow and woe. This term has still a wider meaning. It means, good news or glad tidings; and I may remark that it is altogether the best news that ever fell upon the ear of fallen humanity. How it gladdened the hearts of the shepherds, as they watched their flocks on the plains of Judea, to hear the angel of the Lord say: "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, "Glory to

*Romans 1:1.

God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." Thus was made manifest to the world, the hidden glories of God's nature; how man could be reconciled to man, and also to himself; and offering also to a world of guilty culprits a remedy for sin and uncleanliness; and extending to humanity everywhere the broad invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give thee rest." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come, ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." God be praised, for a Gospel that embraces all—that invites all—offers a remedy for sin to all, and a free and full salvation "to the ends of the earth." Surely the Gospel is good news, and glad tidings of great joy. We notice in the next place:

II. THE DESIGN OF THE GOSPEL.

1. It is the design of the Gospel to enlighten the mind. God is in his own word by his spirit and power, by whomsoever and wherever preached. The Spirit of God accompanies the Word, and through this Word, or Gospel, man learns that he is a sinner, and through this same medium he forms ideas of God and his attributes; and if he worships God at all, he endeavors to worship him in spirit and in truth. For man learns from this same source that "God is a spirit," and they that worship him, "must worship him in spirit and in truth." The heathen worship, and their ceremonies are very imposing; but being without the Gospel of the Son of God, they can have no correct ideas of the author of their being; and being destitute of a knowledge of the Gospel, they are incapable of rendering acceptable service to the God of the Bible. As the sun, the great orb of day, is to the natural world—as his rays of light, chase away darkness, so the Bible, the blessed Gospel of God, is to the moral world; its rays of light penetrate the dark corners of the human heart, and enable man to walk in the light. We learn from the glorious Gos-

pel our true natures; and as the light from the sacred page flashes into the inmost soul, we are led, by the wooings of God's Holy Spirit, who forever accompanies the Word. We are thus led to discern the mistakes of life as the results of sin, and, to some extent, a knowledge of God. For Christ came into the world to show us God. This Gospel, therefore, teaches us our true relation to God.

2. It is the design of the Gospel to teach conviction; or, in other words, to convince us of sin. Nature is a grand book to study; but, without the Gospel of the Son of God, without the revelations which God has made of himself to the human heart, through his Son, Spirit and Word, nature would be to us a sealed book, and we would have nothing to teach us our duty to God, or our duty to our fellow man, or, even, the existence of a God. But with the Bible in our hands, with its truths accompanied by the Holy Ghost impressed upon our hearts, we can read the existence of a God in every object that comes within the range of natural vision. We can see him in the silvery edged cloud; hear him in the storm; and read his footprints alike in the towering mountain, and valley low; the running brook and ever rolling ocean; in every leaf of the forest, and spear of grass which grows upon the green carpeted earth. All! All alike teach the Christian heart the existence of the God of the Bible. But to the Gospel—God's revealed will—we are indebted for those wonderful truths, which lead us to feel that we are sinners, and as such we must perish forever, unless relieved in some way; and in our perfect helplessness, we are led to cry out from within, "What must I do to be saved?" or with Saul, when convicted, or convinced under the power of truth, "What wilt thou have me do?" Thus the soul, under conviction, is led to appeal for help from a higher power, which leads us to notice the remedy for sin, as set forth in the Gospel.

3. What a pall of darkness would forever rest upon the guilty soul, sensible of the burden of guilt, without a remedy. But God comes to his relief, as revealed in the glorious Gospel, and offers a remedy for the

sin-sick soul, speaking in that still small voice, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee." Hence, it is not only the design of the Gospel to teach us conviction, but also conversion, done for us, and in us, by which we have "peace with God." For, "being justified (pardoned) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." That change by which Saul—afterwards called Paul—was brought into covenant favor with God, while pleading in Damascus to be relieved from the burden of sin; and when he believed on the despised Nazarine, "there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized,"—made a new creature in Christ Jesus, the Lord. As an evidence of his conversion, he no longer persecuted the infant Church of Christ; but joined with that little oppressed band of brethren in Damascus, and commenced preaching Christ, and him crucified—declaring that he was "not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." That which he now enjoyed in his own heart he could and did heartily recommend to his fellow men—declaring this to be "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Oh! we rejoice in that Gospel that brings relief to the troubled heart, and enables each unburdened soul to say,

"To God I'm reconciled;
His pard'ning voice I hear;
He owns me for his child;
I can no longer fear."

4. It is the design of the Gospel to perfect the work. When enlightened, when convicted, when converted, God would have us go on to perfection. "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God. Of the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit." Holiness, purity of heart, and sanctification, are terms found frequently in God's Word. And they

have a meaning which should ever lead us to greater activity in holy living—that we may be "filled with all the fullness of God, and be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." God teaches us in the Gospel, to be holy; to be holy in this life, to be holy now. Trusting, resting in Jesus now.

"Forever here my rest shall be,
Close to thy bleeding side;
This all my hope, and all my plea,—
For me the Savior died."

The tender rosebud, under the gentle showers of rain, and warm rays of the sun, soon bursts forth, and becomes a full grown rose. So the babe in Christ, as such we are when first converted, but under the hallowed influence of the Spirit of God, and following the teachings of the Gospel, as directed by the Spirit of the Master, receiving "the pure milk of the Word," we grow up to manhood, and become able to receive the strong meat, which "belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil," For justification is sanctification commenced in the soul; and by giving all diligence, to make sure work, that will stand the test, we add to our faith, virtue, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in us, and abound, we shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is God's order that we go forward,—that we be pure,—that we be holy; and if we do not seek for it, live for it, and enjoy it, even in this life, we disobey the command of him who said, by his Spirit through Paul, to the Ephesians, "Be holy and without blame before him in love." The pure in heart "shall see God;" and live with him forever. This leads us to notice further:

5. That the design of the Gospel is to reveal to man a future state—a place of rest for the pure in heart, and a place of misery for those who know not God, nor obey his Gospel. How dark, and how dreary, would the future be, were it not for the hope we have

through the Gospel of God's eternal Son! Through his blessed word we learn that if we die, we shall live again; and our faith, resting upon and in the eternal promises of Jesus in the Gospel, our hope leaps on; the curtain is removed; and by faith we look up and beyond the shady river, through our tears it may be, and we see the millions redeemed through the blood of the Lamb, washed and cleansed from all sin, congregated before the throne of God, singing the song of redeeming love, in heaven's own melody, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion, forever and ever, Amen." And as the song of the redeemed of every land, and of every age, rolls up the golden arches of the eternal city, breaking in sweet echo, on the river of life, to be taken up and repeated by the redeemed forever, is no extravagant fancy. This hope of Heaven, by the Christian, has a sure support in the Gospel of the Son of God. Jesus promises a crown of life to the faithful; and Paul tells us, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

"O, would he more of Heaven bestow,
And when the vessels break,
Let our triumphant spirits go
To grasp the God we seek.
In rapturous awe, on him to gaze,
Who bought the sight for me
And shout and wonder at his grace
To all eternity.'

What a misfortune, that any should miss entering into rest, when all might be saved. But, unbelief forever keeps the soul away from Christ and out of heaven; and fits it for companionship with lost spirits in the world of misery and woe, "Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is unquenched."

"Forever wasting, yet enduring still;
Dying perpetually, yet never dead."

Where all moral influence is forever left behind, as the poor, unfortunate lost soul launches out into the black abyss of eternal night. "Immense, where gravitation; shifting, turns the other way; and to some dread, unknown, infernal centre downward weighs."

Unbelief! thou monster evil!
To know thee is to call thee devil!
Since thou the cause of so much sorrow,
We demur to-day, and the same to-morrow.

This brings us finally to notice

III. SOME REASONS WHY WE SHOULD NOT BE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

Shame is a very great passion of the human soul. It was introduced by sin, and sin is the only thing for which we should be ashamed. A sense of wrong doing leads to confusion and shame; destroys our moral courage; renders us weak and feeble in our own estimation, as well as in the estimation of others. But what is there in connection with the service of the blessed Master, for which we should be ashamed?

"Ashamed of Jesus, that dear Friend,
On whom my hopes of heaven depend;
No; when I blush, be this my shame,—
That I no more revere his name."

However, there were those (the Pharisees) in the days of Christ, who professed to be ashamed of Jesus, because he ate with Publicans and Sinners; and found fault with Jesus, to his disciples, because their Master showed compassion for erring ones. But what encouragement Jesus gives to the poor sinner, who feels the weight of guilt resting upon his poor soul, in the answer the Pharisees received from the lips of the blessed Christ—withering, indeed, to the self-righteous and self-conceited, egotistical class, but full of the love of God, and help for the sinner, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." * * * "For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Paul bears testimony that Jesus Christ came into the world for the special purpose "to save sinners;" and then adds, "of whom I am chief." If, then, the merits of Jesus' blood could cleanse the leprous soul of "the chief of sinners," who need despair? And how commendable, and inviting,—instead of feeling ashamed of the Christ of the Bible, and a Gospel so full of invitations, and promises, and effecting so many grand results, he is bold to maintain and defend it.

Again: There were those in Christ's day, who object-

ed to him, because his mission embraced the poor. Now, if there be one feature of the Gospel, or one characteristic of Jesus, more commendable than another, it is the thought that he specifies the fact that the poor, especially, are embraced in the atoning merits of his blood. And while all are included in the provision made, (for Jesus tasted death for every man) all may come unto him and be saved. It seems to me that the poor have a two-fold promise, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him;" and again, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them." But instead of this being a cause of offence, and a reason for faultfinding, it but demonstrates the greatness of Christ's manhood, and the purity of his great loving heart. Deprive the poor of the privilege of becoming the sons of God, and at once the happiness of millions of our race is forever gone. For many of the children of God can say,—

"No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in the wilderness,
A poor wayfaring man."

But up through their tears, it may be, they can look, having faith in Jesus, they hold a title, bearing the broad seal of the Holy Ghost, to possessions in the New Jerusalem; and can say:

"Yonder's my house and portion fair,
My heart and my treasure there,
And my abiding home."

And as they drop this mortal coil, it is to rise above the sky, and be with Christ forever.

Again: We would not be ashamed to be called the sons, or to be made the heirs of the rich, who command their millions in gold, or to be put in possession of great affluence, or have great honors bestowed; and yet, all earthly honors and riches will fade and fail. The tooth of time forever wears and wastes. Time—Old Time—is a sword which cuts every way; and soon, very soon, we will be bereft of, or leave behind all earthly possessions, for we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But not so with those who have treasures in Heaven.

Those who have sought and found "the pearl of great price," who have embraced Christ by faith, they are heirs of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords—"sons of God," now, "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Finally: There is no reason why we should be ashamed of our home in Heaven, or the associations of that better clime. Jesus tells us that the future home of the Christian is a mansion, "In my Father's house are many mansions." In this world the finest and most costly mansions yield to the ravages of time and soon decay, but in Heaven, never. Here, the grandest edifice soon needs repair—there, always in perfect order—all, all bear the stamp of eternity. For, when God has blown out the sun, and the stars have fallen from their places, and when he has rolled up the heavens as a mighty scroll, and all have passed away with a great noise, the home of the Christian is still secure. God, the Christian's loving Father, yet occupies his throne; and the foundation of the Eternal City is still unmoved and immovable. Still, we have

> "No less days to sing God's praise,
> Than when we first begun,"

As to the associations of the heavenly country—how pure and desirable. When we remember that God is holy, and that Heaven is a holy place, and that none but the pure in heart can enter there, what must be the standard of society, where all sin having been washed out, all tears forever wiped away, and the pure and the holy of every age, kindred and tongue, marshaled upon the plains of immortality, with the angels of light, the tall sons of the morning, the cherubims and seraphims congregated before the throne of God and the Lamb forever.

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Just how much life means, words refuse to tell, because they cannot. The very doorway of life is hung around with flowery emblems, to indicate that it is for some purpose. Life may be grand. God intended it to be glorious, and so paved its course with diamonds, fringed its banks with flowers, and over-arched it with stars; while around it he has spread the physical universe —suns, moons, worlds, constellations, systems—all that is magnificent in motion, sublime in magnitude, and grand in order and obedience.

But how few appreciate the grandeur of life. To float lazily down the stream is to move forward, but unless the speed is increased by personal effort, the individual will find himself always at the same distance from that which he is following. Rev. Andrew J. Lyda. D.D., the subject of this sketch, chose a different course. He chose to make the most and the best of the powers God was pleased to bestow upon him, and turn to the best possible account every outward advantage within his reach.

Brother Lyda was born in Hancock, Maryland, January 14th, 1821. His parents were religious—they had family worship, and through this great, silent, irresistible influence, his young heart was deeply impressed at a very tender age,—so that he realized the importance of giving his heart to God. The calm, deep stream of religious influence, moved on in silent, but overwhelming power.

In a letter to the writer, he pays this beautiful and touching tribute to his mother: "My mother taught me to pray when I first began to talk." And what is the result of that Godly instruction? That mother's influence could not die. She wields a power to-day over the life of her son, more decisive far than syllogisms in argument, or courts of appeal in authority. So much so that not a day has passed, from his earliest recollection, that he has not tried to pray.

He made a profession of his faith in Jesus Christ, and was received into the communion of the Methodist Episcopal Church January 23d, 1838, under the pastoral care of the late Rev. William Simmons, in the Second Street Church, Zanesville, O.

Being early impressed that God had called him to the Gospel ministry, and that it was his duty to prepare for that high and holy calling, he spent four years in Augusta College, then the

chief institution of his denomination in the west. Here his feelings and passions were disciplined and restrained. Here, also, true and worthy motives were inspired, and a profound religious feeling, built upon a pure morality, was inculcated. It was while he was a student in Augusta College that he was authorized to exhort. One year later, in 1842, he was licensed as a local preacher. With Rev. Isaac Collard as his Presiding Elder, and Wm. C. Doudy—now Dr. Doudy—as his class leader, we are not surprised that he succeeded so rapidly that he was recommended to, and received by, the Ohio Annual Conference as an itinerant Methodist preacher, October 14th, 1843, and was appointed to Georgetown Circuit with twenty-one appointments, with Rev. David Estel as preacher in charge. His next field of labor was Troy and New Carlisle, with Rev. David Kemper—then of Gallipolis Station—which was then as now, an important and difficult field, and required ability as well as piety to fill it successfully. At the close of this pastorate, he was sent to Gallia Circuit, with Rev. Samuel Maddox.

This year closed his labors in Ohio. His next appointment was to Point Pleasant, in Virginia. While laboring in this field, the Western Virginia Conference was set off to itself by the General Conference of the Church. It was the privilege of our brother to have been present in Wheeling, when the Ohio preachers met with the Pittsburgh Conference, as ordered by the General Conference. The tie of Conference relation, which had hitherto bound them together, was now severed by one stroke of the General Conference, and from the dismemberment then occasioned, sprang into being the West Virginia Conference, of which Bro. Lyda became a member of prominence at once. He was appointed this year to Charleston Station, where he succeeded some of the strongest men the Church has produced in the past of her history.

During this pastorate, the recollection of which is still precious to the members and friends of Methodism in that city, the cholera raged as an epidemic. No pastor was ever called to pass through a period of greater gloom; and yet as he was brought face to face with the suffering, and dying, and dead—ministering to their wants, standing by them in the final struggle, preparing them for the grave, and preaching their funeral sermons, he proved himself to be, not the Priest nor the Levite, but the Good Sammaritan. Here he labored for nearly two years, and did, it is but just to say, as much for his Church as any who had preceded him, or as any who have succeeded in that field of labor. While here, he secured a lot in Malden, circulated a subscription, employed men, and built a neat and substantial church, ready for plastering and painting. He had the pleasure of occupying the church for some months, before he left the station. He was also blessed in his labors in Charleston with a glorious revival.

He was present at Clarksburg, in 1847, when the Western Virginia Conference was organized—Bishop Waugh presiding. At the close of this session of Conference, Brother Lyda was sta-

tioned in Clarksburg, at that time the educational centre of the Conference—a position he was, by both education and experience, specially qualified to fill. He occupied this field for two consecutive years—the full limit at that time, and left the Church greatly strengthened in character as well as in numbers.

His next field was two years at Parkersburg. Here, as in former stations, he showed himself a workman worthy of his calling, and in this important centre he performed valuable, and I may say, lasting work for the Church. He was sent from Parkersburg to Weston, where he remained two years. The journey of eighty-four miles overland, was made in a common lumber wagon, at that time about the only means of transportation which could be procured by those removing from one portion of the State to another. From this field, after two years of earnest and efficient work, Brother Lyda was appointed to Buckhannon, where he had a warm place in the affections of his people.

From this charge, he was brought into a new experience and placed in a new relation to his brethren, and the Conference. When the appointments were read, he was placed in charge of the Parkersburg District, where he remained for four consecutive years. In the position of Presiding Elder, he demonstrated superior executive ability, something quite essential to success in such a position; and also proved himself popular with both preachers and people. While on this District, the suit in court involving the ownership of the church property in Parkersburg, was decided by Judge Edmondson in favor of the M. E. Church. Brother Lyda was present when the decision of the court was read, and saw the profound sensation which it produced.

At the close of this term of service, he requested as his field of labor, Troy Circuit, where he remained two years. He was in this field when the war commenced, and like all his brethren in the Methodist Episcopal ministry in the State, he was true to the cause of the Union. Many were the dangers he encountered, and many the trials through which he passed; but he was firm to the end. His courage never faltered, and his faith in the final triumph of the "old flag" never failed him.

From this field of toil and strife, he was removed to Moundsville Station, but about the middle of the year, having been commissioned as Chaplain of the Third West Virginia Regiment, Volunteer Infantry, he entered the service of his country, where he remained, true to his Master and true to the Union, for eighteen months; when he, for reasons satisfactory to himself, tendered his resignation, which took effect April 29th, 1864.

His next assignment of duty was to the Clarksburg District as Presiding Elder. During his term of service on this District he preached the funeral sermon of forty-three men, on Sabbath, at 11 A. M., in the M. E. Church, at Rock Cave, in Upshur county. From reliable information, there were one thousand people present, among them about twenty-three widows and forty orphan children of the deceased men. Of sixty men who were drilling

for home guards, forty-three died in Southern prisons. At the close of his four years of successful service in this field, his brethren elected him, at the head of his ticket, to represent them in the General Conference at Chicago.

His field of labor for the next three years, was Chapline Street, Wheeling. He was successful in all respects in this important station. While here the church and parsonage were greatly improved, at an expense of about $1,000; and during his three years service, the Church was blessed with several interesting revivals. At the close of his work at Chapline Street, he was appointed to Wesley Church, where he remained three years.

In June, 1873, the Illinois Wesleyan University conferred upon Brother Lyda the honorary degree of Doctor in Divinity—an honor most worthily bestowed.

After a few years spent in business life, the Doctor is now the efficient pastor of the M. E. Church in Kingwood.

SERMON XIV.

BY

REV. ANDREW J. LYDA, D.D.

THEME:—MILLENNIUM, OR, SABBATH OF REST—TO GOD'S CHURCH AND PEOPLE.

TEXT:—They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—Isaiah xi:11.

The prophet, in strains of divinely inspired eloquence, reveals to us the advent of the Messiah, the establishment of his kingdom, and its final and glorious triumph in the last days of the world's history.

In the investigation of what we conceive to be the subject involved in the text, we shall submit our own thoughts based on the Scriptures, aided in our calculations by consulting the writings of others, who have given our theme their best thought and attention.

I. THE NATURE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE.

At no period in the history of the world have men been entirely destitute of at least a limited knowledge of God. A knowledge of his existence, nature, attributes and character must be derived either from tradition, the book of nature or the Bible. The facts may be handed down from father to son and from one generation to another; such knowledge, however, would necessarily be dark and confused.

The philosopher enters the sublime field of nature.

Here he contemplates the fragrant flower, purling stream, crystal fountain, blazing lightning and roaring thunder. Then, he turns his eye of amazement and wonder to the tribes of living creatures. From the smallest insect, perceivable only by the microscope, to the largest animal that prowls in the forest. From the smallest fish, found in the mountain rivulet, to the great leviathan, that baffles with the wild waves of the ocean storm. From the smallest bird to the eagle that wings its flight through the elastic wind, and sports with its broad pinions on the lofty clouds. On all these he sees the impress of the wise and Almighty hand.

The astronomer, as he computes the number, distance, magnitude and revolutions of the worlds suspended in the immensity of space, cries out with adoring admiration, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth forth his handy work." And yet, all these wonderful works of nature fail to give man a correct idea of God's real character; hence, he must turn to the Holy Bible. Here he finds on every inspired page that God is revealed as the ever pure, the ever living, self-existent God—throned in the bosom of immensity, and holding all secure the eternal destinies of all the worlds. This revelation being made in the Bible, is confirmed by all nature. These truths, however, are but demonstrations to the mind. God must be revealed to the heart. A saving knowledge of the Divine Being, infinitely transcends all other knowledge. "This is eternal life to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

II. THE WORLD, TO AN ALARMING EXTENT, IS DESTITUTE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE.

The world is said to contain about fifteen hundred millions of human souls. About two-thirds of this entire population are in paganism; hence, without a knowledge of the true God and of Jesus Christ, the world's redeemer. As a result, look at the dark picture the world presents. Go to China, that widely extended and densely populated country, with her four

or five hundred millions of inhabitants, mantled in moral darkness. To a great extent they are without a knowledge of God, of the Lord Jesus Christ, of Heaven, or hell, or of man's real immortality—no Bible, no Sabbath, no temples of religious worship; no altars on which to offer sacrifices to the true God. Go to India and Hindoostan, lying south of China, and you will find their habitations full of wretchedness and cruelty. Go to Africa; here the sciences had their origin; here the alphabet was invented; here stood large and opulent cities, and here stand the grandest pyramids of the world. For ages Africa has been wrapped in a dark night of superstition, ignorance and error. We are glad to say, however, that light is dawning upon this land of memorable events, with all other parts of our globe. For a moment, let us look at our own America. We boast of the best government on the earth, of our civil and religious liberties, of our nation's flag, of her stars and stripes. For the perpetuity of which we have poured out our country's blood and treasure. We claim a population of fifty millions. Of these, not more than one-third are even nominal Christians. If summoned to the bar of God, and weighed in the balance of his eternal justice, how many of these millions would be found wanting? Thus we have presented a brief survey of some of the principal parts of our world, and find that it lies in iniquity, and men are without God, and are living in the region and shadow of death.

III. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THIS KNOWLEDGE SHALL PREVAIL IN THE LAST DAYS.

In devising a scheme of human redemption, God designed that it should be commensurate with the wants of our fallen nature and the interests of our race. "Therefore, as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." "Like as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up" to the gaze of the entire world. "The knowledge of the Lord shall fill the world as the waters

cover the sea." This period is looked to by many able divines as a millennium, or Sabbath of rest and unparalleled success to God's Church and people, which shall last a thousand years.

When will this Sabbath commence? Let us examine the question in the light of the Scriptures." The "little horn," spoken of by Daniel, the "man of sin," designated by Paul, and the "beast," referred to by John, evidently all denote the same power, and that power is the Roman Pontiff, or the Pope of Rome. The overthrow of this power, and the beginning of the glorious Sabbath or Millennium, will run parallel with each other; one waxing—the other waning; one increasing—the other diminishing. As the light of the great Sabbath morning approaches, the darkness of the moral night will be sweeping by. Light dawning—darkness receding.

It is conceded that the fourth beast that Daniel saw in his vision refers to the Roman empire.* The power of this beast is represented as deadly and terrible. It devoured and broke in pieces the other beasts. So Rome reduced the other kingdoms, commanding the whole earth and the navigable seas. Diverse, or different in its form of government, it had ten horns, so Rome was divided into ten kingdoms. There came up among these horns another "little horn." It had eyes, denoting the far reaching eye of the Catholic Church in all her ecclesiastical movements. It shall speak great words against the Most High. The Pope assumes to be infallible. It made war with the saints and prevailed against them, says Daniel. This power shall wear out the saints. The Catholic Church has pursued the Protestant world with an unrelenting hand of opposition. It was this power that "spilt the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

Of the man of sin, it is said by Paul, "He opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats."

Of the beast, John says, "It was given unto him to

*Daniel vii: 7.

make war with the saints, and to overcome them, and power was given unto him over all kindreds and tongues and nations."* Thus the "little horn," the "man of sin," and the "beast," all point unmistakably to the same power, and that power is the Roman Pontiff.

How long will this power continue? History informs us that the Pope of Rome assumed the title of Universal Bishop under the Emperor of Constantinople, in the year 606, and was invested with temporal power in the year 755, about the time the man of sin was fully revealed.

Daniel says, the "little horn," or the power it represents, shall continue for "a time, times, and the dividing of time." A time means one year, times two years, and the dividing of time, six months; or three years and six months. There were thirty days in a Jewish month, and twelve months in a year, which gives us twelve hundred and sixty days. As a day in prophetic time means a year, we have twelve hundred and sixty years for this power to continue. Power was also given to the beast for forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty years, prophetic time.

John speaks of the Church under the emblem of a woman. She fled to the wilderness, where a place was prepared for her, that she might escape the red dragon, that was waiting to devour her child, where she should be fed a thousand, two hundred and three score days, or for twelve hundred and sixty years of Jewish time. Now, add this twelve hundred and sixty to seven hundred and fifty-five, and we reach the year 2015. Therefore, we are induced to believe that the power represented by the "little horn," the "man of sin," and the "beast" will continue, more or less, until the beginning of the seventh thousandth year of the world's history, when its influence shall be so curtailed, its doctrines and usages so fully modified and conformed to the principles of the True Christian faith; while all branches of the Church of God are flowing together, and seeing eye to eye, shall resolve into one Holy Catholic Church on earth, and the great Sabbath of rest shall be ushered in and shall ast a thousand years.

*Revelations xiii: 7.

I submit the following remarkable facts, which are worthy of consideration: Temporal power, as before stated, was vested in the Pope in 755. In 1870 the Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church, proclaimed the Pope infallible.

The war between Prussia and France, resulted in a union of the Italian States. The city of Rome, the home of the Pope, being the seat of the united government, and his temporal power was wrested from his hands. Thus he stood shorn of his strength. Strike a medium between the time that he assumed the title of universal Bishop, and the time he was vested with temporal power, and add, say 610 to 1260, and you are brought to the year 1870, when he lost his temporal power. Thus demonstrating the truth of Bible prophesy, and clearly pointing out the Pope as the unmistakable power represented by the "beast."

We propose to notice some of the important features which mark this period:

1. The power of Satan shall be curtailed, if not destroyed. John says, "I saw an angel come down from Heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled," so that he will exert but little, if any, influence in the world. Now, he seeks to destroy the souls of men. He would rob heaven, depopulate the world and bury the intelligent creatures whom God has made, in blackness and darkness forever. The great angel shall lay hold of the great dragon, and bind him with a great chain, and thus restrain his great and cruel power.

2. Christ shall reign. "He shall reign a thousand years." A period corresponding to that during which the devil is imprisoned in the bottomless pit. It is thought by some that the martyrs will rise, and that Christ will reign with and over them for a thousand years on earth. We cannot accept this as a Bible truth, but incline to the opinion that he will reign in his spiritual presence until his kingdom shall tri-

umph over all opposing systems, which shall be crushed before his triumphal car, as he rides forth in the greatness of his strength. "His dominion is an everasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." "The heathen," China, India, Hindoostan and all the islands of the sea, "shall be given to him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of God and his Christ, and he shall reign a thousand years."

3. The Gospel will be universally proclaimed. "And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." The general spread of the Gospel is beautifully suggested by Ezekiel's vision of the holy waters, when he speaks of their rise, extent, depth and healing virtues. The same idea is suggested by the "little stone," cut out of the mountains without hands, which itself finally became a great mountain and filled the world. Already the Gospel has been preached to every nation under heaven; but it must be so universally diffused everywhere, that there will not be a city, town, village, community or family which shall not have the Gospel of Christ. As the waters cover the bottoms and fill up the channels of the sea, so must Gospel truth fill the whole earth. "When one man shall not say to another, know ye the Lord, but all shall know him from the least to the greatest."

4. Universal peace shall prevail. War has been one of the greatest curses of our world. Nations have met on the field, while thousands have rolled their garments in blood, and gone down to soldiers' graves, often to simply gratify the proud ambition of designing men. There comes a time when the "sword shall be beaten into plowshares, and spears into pruning hooks, and nations shall learn war no more." Now military academies are established with large proportions, where the science and art of war are taught and men are educated to wield the sword, but, "nations

shall learn war no more." Other, and more satisfactory, methods will be adopted to settle national difficulties. "Then peace on earth will hold her easy sway, and man forget his brother man to slay." Men will be so influenced by the Gospel, that the great law of love will prevail and cement all hearts, while the golden chain of friendship shall bind the world together.

5. The animosity of the animal tribes shall cease. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them; and the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shalle at straw like the ox." Thus the wolf, the most ferocious, and the lamb, the most innocent, will dwell in peace together. We see no reason why we may not accept the literal statement, and believe it will come to pass.

I am inclined to believe that this world will be renovated and purified by fire, and be inhabited by the saints of God. That it will be connected with the Heavenly City, and there will be communication between this world and that. It may be possible that we will travel in chariots of fire, drawn by horses of fire, and thus make the journey back and forth as rapidly as Elijah went in the whirl-wind to Heaven.

Considering the foregoing facts and many others that might be noticed, which will characterize that period, what a grand spectacle this world will present! "Almost like to Heaven, a place where gods might dwell and wander with delight!"

IV. THE MEANS TO BE EMPLOYED IN BRINGING ABOUT THIS HAPPY STATE.

1. The Church. God established his Church on earth, Jesus Christ being the chief Corner Stone. She is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Speaking of the final triumph of the Church, the prophet says: "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the top of the mountains, and shall be elevated above the hills, and all nations

shall flow unto it." But how can these things be? Suppose we stand in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico—we inquire, whence came this vast body of water? To determine this question, we go back until we stand amid the mountain scenery of our own West Virginia; the wealth and grandeur of which are scarcely excelled on the face of the globe. Here from the crevices of the moss-covered rocks and deep mountain gorges, break forth streams of water, which go leaping and smiling down the mountain sides, and soon are lost in the broad and mighty rivers flowing into the great reservoir. Now, the question is answered and the mystery comprehended. So we may represent the Church as being established on the summit of the highest mountain on the earth. There is a moving among the nations, and men and women are coming from every quarter of the globe seeking a spiritual home in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. "A nation shall be born to God in a day." In accomplishing this work, it is the prerogative of the Church:

(1.) To send out her Gospel heralds. Christ calls men into the work of the ministry, and endows them with the Holy Ghost, but it is left for the Church to send them into the vineyard, judge of their qualifications, guard their moral and religious character, as well as control their labor. God has raised up men adapted to every condition of human society; men of education, thought and reasoning powers; men of eloquent lips, calling into requisition the sublime truths of God's Word, and everything in nature; men of zeal, whose hearts are burdened with love for the salvation of souls, crying out, "Oh, that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night over the slain of the daughters of my people." Such are the men whom God has sent into the world to cultivate Immanuel's land. Of all branches of the Christian Church, no class of Christian ministers have done more for the conversion of the world than those of the great Methodist family. They have traced our streams, crossed our mountains, and penetrated our forests, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, wherever the people would hear,

whether in the log cabin, school house, Church or open air, on the mountain, hill-top, or in the valley.

(2.) Again, It is the prerogative of the Church to place the Bible in the hands of her ministers. The Church authorizes her heralds to read the Holy Scriptures in the congregations, and to preach the same. While a dispensation of the Gospel has been committed to the minister, and he holds forth, as a teacher, the oracles of God, they are to be committed to the hands of all the people, that they may read for themselves, and seek for its golden treasures, assured that here they will find the pearl of great price.

The Bible is God's book, inspired and designed to make men wise unto salvation. Although there are locked up in this Divine book mysteries that may never be fully comprehended by men nor angels, yet, so far as man's personal salvation is concerned, the teachings of this book are easily understood, and its sublime truths so plain and simple that the "wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." The Bible is the torch of eternity, lit at Heaven's own fires. This book "God threw from his sacred palace down to earth to guide his wandering children home." Jesus said to the Jews, "Search the Scriptures." The Bible, read as an open book, and correctly expounded by its teachers, its truths impressed upon human hearts by the Divine Spirit, must ultimately bring the race to God.

2. In carrying out God's designs, the Church must employ contributions of worldly goods. When the Temple was to be built at Jerusalem, men were sent to Lebanon for cedars and to Ophir for gold. God makes the oaks and cedars grow, and has hidden the precious metals in the rocks and mountains of this earth, which are to be developed and utilized in conveying the gospel to all the inhabitants of the world. It matters not who may discover the mines, nor who may dig the shining ore, God will use all hands in furnishing the means to carry on the grand enterprises of his cause and kingdom in the world. The people holding the gold and silver of this world, be they saints or sinners, should regard themselves as

God's stewards, and cultivate a spirit of large benevolence, "Giving as the Lord hath prospered them."

Thus we conclude, that with a holy ministry, a Holy Bible, and consecrated means, the Church will be able to take the world for God. Praise the name of Jesus! The ministers are working, the gold and silver are working; the press is working, and through all these God-appointed means the Holy Ghost is working, so that the time must come when the cry will go up from every land, and kindred, and tongue, and people, on the face of the whole earth. "Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

This will be a season of great peace and prosperity to the Church. True, much is yet to be done, but when we survey the past three-score years, we are astounded at the rapid march of the arts and sciences, and the grand success of the Gospel, the building of Churches, and the planting of institutions of learning, we may well conclude that the coming century will far exceed anything the world has ever witnessed. During the past half century the earth has been begirted with iron bands; rivers have been bridged; mountains tunneled; valleys raised; and now the iron horse goes sweeping through our mountains and forests with wonderful speed, while intelligence is communicated from one part of this continent, and of the world, to the other, as on wings of lightning; but nothing has been more rapid in its brilliant career than the glorious Gospel of the Son of God; and men have been hearing Messiah's name from the rising to the going down of the sun. We may not live to see the light of the Millenial day, but our children's children may live when the Jews will acknowledge the Messiah; when Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, and salvation shall be heard in her streets; when the whole earth shall be the garden of the Lord, and

> "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
> Does his successive journeys run;
> His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
> Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

PERSONAL SKETCH.

In 1866, a call was published by the *Christian Advocate* for young ministers to labor in West Virginia. Among those who respodned to this call was the Rev. Samuel B. D. Prickitt. He was born at Columbus, Georgia, in 1840—his parents having resided there for a few years. Shortly after the birth of the subject of this sketch, they returned to their former New Jersey home, where Samuel grew up, and was liberally educated in Burlington county, of that State.

When he arrived in West Virginia, he was employed by the Rev. Thomas H. Monroe, then Presiding Elder of the Parkersburg District, and was placed in charge of the M. E. Church at Elizabeth, and Burning Springs, Wirt county. The following year, 1867, he was admitted into the West Virginia Conference on trial; and from that time till the present, he has steadily risen until he occupies a high rank among his brethren. He has filled a number of important stations, including Zane Street Church, Wheeling, and State Street Church, Charleston; and at this time is Presiding Elder of the Guyandotte District, with residence at Huntington.

He was, for a long time, Treasurer of the Conference Aid Society, and for several years past, he has officiated as Statistical Secretary of the Conference, a position his carefulness and methodical habits specially qualify him to fill.

Brother Prickitt is a superior preacher. He has read a great deal, and digested what he has read. He is a close thinker, and always writes his sermons with care. His mind is naturally logical, and his sermons, therefore, are always clear and incisive. He is industrious, and is at once a fine preacher, a diligent pastor, and a thorough business man.

SERMON XV.

BY

REV. S. B. D. PRICKITT, P. E.

THEME—PREACHING THE GOSPEL.*

TEXT.—"And there they preached the Gospel.—Acts xiv: 7.

In this chapter we are introduced to two men in the midst of a remarkable career. They are engaged in a work the design of which, when properly understood, must have commended itself to all. Their purpose was not merely to make men acquainted with, but to bring them back to, God. Starting from Antioch, where they had been separated for the work by direction of the Holy Ghost, they had sailed to Cyprus; from thence through Perga and Antioch in Pisidia, they came unto Iconium, where, being threatened with an assault both by Jews and Gentiles, "they fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about, and there they preached the Gospel."

There was nothing new in their design, which was, as we have said, to bring men to the knowledge and love of God. This was the problem which had puzzled the wisest of philosophers and the best of men. And although, even at that early period of the world's history, the triumphs of human genius had been marvelous, resulting in achievements which challenge our admiration, there is one achievement to which it had

*Preached before the West Virginia Conference at Morgantown, October 1, 1879.

never been adequate, one feat which it has always failed to accomplish. It has never been able to climb to the throne of Jehovah and find out God. It has never been able to discover a way of deliverance from sin. Although there was nothing new in their design, there was, however, something new in their plan and mode of procedure. Their theory was God's, and their mode of procedure was divinely appointed. God gave the world ample time and a fair field in which to make the experiment, and for four thousand years men had been groping in darkness, and falling into one superstition after another, in vain attempts to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. Then, when the fullness of time had come, God appears, revealing himself in the person of Christ, and opening a way of deliverance for man. Our text presents this way—this plan, which is the Gospel; and the agency for publishing it, which is the living ministry. Let us examine these.

I. THE GOSPEL.

In noticing this plan, we will find that it has every qualification requisite to success. It not only contains everything necessary to the salvation of those who accept it, but everything necessary to attract the attention, to convince the judgment, and to win the affections of those who listen to it.

1. It contains nothing contrary to what man accepts as truth; and it takes his faint conceptions, and throws upon them additional light. There are certain truths which are universally acknowledged—which have been held by man everywhere; certain truths which, being clothed according to the peculiar taste or traits of mind of each nation and tribe, if not, indeed, of each individual, thus took on a different form or coloring, but which, stripped of these, always exhibit the same features. There is, for instance, the idea of God; the awful fact of sin; the terrible truth that God is offended; and, perhaps, a faint idea that God is willing to be reconciled.

Take the first of these; the idea of God. Whether we believe, with some, that the presence of this truth rested upon tradition alone, or, with others, that it is

connatural to the human mind, we may, as a matter of fact, affirm the universality of the idea. There has not been found a race of men who were utterly destitute of some knowledge of a Supreme Being.

So with the second of these: the awful fact of sin. The presence of evil in the world is a fact which has always been recognized by man. It is a fact just as distinctly marked in the experience of the human heart, and in the history of the race, as any fact in the physical universe around us. Sin meets us at every step in life; and if there is a fact anywhere recorded upon the pages of history, or written upon the experience of the race, it is the fact that sin, with its terrific consequences, is abroad everywhere in our world. It is not merely a doctrine taught in the book of revelation; it is not simply a truth presented by divine inspiration for our acceptance, but it is a stern fact that meets us everywhere, where the Bible has been and where the Bible has never been. Where men have never heard of this blessed Gospel, sin is there just as certainly as in this land of Bibles. And being thus universally present, it has been universally recognized by man.

So, too, with the third of these truths: the terrible truth that God was offended with man. The universal prevalence of this truth is seen in the fact that wherever man has attempted worship (and you find him nowhere except as a worshipper—he is a religious being), whenever he has attempted to approach God, the prevailing attitude is that of fear; he seems ever conscious that the anger of Jehovah is upon him. And coupled with this is the faint idea that God is willing to be reconciled—that, in some way, it is possible to propitiate the Majesty of heaven. Not only is there found resting upon the heart of universal humanity a deep and abiding conviction that something must be done to expiate the guilt of sin, some restitution must be made, some suffering must be endured, some sacrifice offered, to atone for past misdeeds; but in connection with this is the idea, the hope, that God will be propitious. Hence, men in all ages have had recourse to penances and prayers, to self-inflicted tortures and

costly sacrifices, to appease a righteous anger which their sins had excited, and avert an impending punishment. Sacrificial offerings have prevailed in every nation and in every age.

Now, the universal prevalence of these truths not only prepared the way for the acceptance of the Gospel, but the fact that the Gospel not only contained nothing contrary to these ideas, but gave additional light on these points, proves its divine origin and rendered the work of the apostles comparatively easy.

Starting with the first of these, the idea of God, the Gospel gives additional light. The world was without any knowledge of God as a merciful and divine Father. The universe was full of God. Everywhere the demonstration of God is complete and perfect; but without revelation there is no other knowledge of God than that of great and inexorable Power that has originated this universe and set it going. But this Gospel reveals the additional and glorious fact of the Fatherhood of God—reveals the gracious truth that he is a compassionate, tender, loving Father, and that we are his children. And then, as to the fact of sin: The Gospel, carrying with it the Old Testament revelation, gives the only satisfactory explanation as to how sin came into the world; not why God permitted it to enter, but how it came. And no matter how you interpret the account in Genesis, whether you give it a literal or a figurative interpretation, it is there clearly shown that God is not the author of our misery and woe, but that by man's disobedience, by man's choice, sin entered the world, and death by sin. And God is shown to be offended because of our sin. And then, as to the possibility of reconciliation, the Gospel alone shows the way and provides the sacrifice. It shows that all the sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation, and all the offerings of the heathen, which must have come down to them from primitive revelation, are insufficient and unmeaning, save as they point to Christ as the Lamb of God, who died to take away the sins of the world. In examining this plan further, we notice:

2. Its conditions are simple and suited to all. It

not only provides a universal salvation, but the conditions upon which its blessings are to be bestowed, its privileges enjoyed, are such that man everywhere is found capable of meeting them: repentance and faith—repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Offering, as it does, salvation to all on the ground of faith, it goes to every man, and calls upon him to exercise that which arises within him naturally and necessarily on its appropriate occasions. All men have faith. They have faith in something, though they may not have faith in God. Man cannot help believing. The state of mind which we term faith, exists in us by our very nature. It is not only there, but, by the very constitution of our nature, it must remain there while man is what he is. And the Gospel, by presenting Christ as the object of faith, and offering to man spiritual restoration on the ground of faith, not only rendered its acceptance possible to all, but placed it upon the only principle in our nature which constitutes the true bond of union between God and man. Faith is the tie which binds us to our Maker; and no other principle, standing first, and standing alone, can take its place. And then:

3. The Gospel meets the yearnings—the longings—of our race for an incarnation. Humanity, in all ages, anterior to the incarnation, has evinced this longing for some such provision as the Gospel makes for its moral and spiritual necessities in the incarnation, death and ascension of Jesus. All its mythologies and speculations were but so many unconscious prophecies and longings of humanity for a divine-human prophet, priest and king. This Gospel of ours claims, indeed, to be the "great mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh," and to be foolishness to the wisdom of this world; yet it by no means claims to be out of analogy with all that men had ever thought or felt before. It represents all creation as groaning and travailing in pain until now, and it represents Jesus as the stiller of creation's groans, himself at once the eternal Son of God, and the leader of humanity in its final march to victory and the realization of its unspeakable desires. And it was this

Deity in human form, walking among men, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, and bleeding on the Cross—this Divine man presented to us in the Gospel, that, despite the prejudices of the synagogue and the doubts of the academy, found, and still finds, his way to the hearts of the masses.

But, perhaps, the crowning excellence of the Gospel is in this:

4. It submits its claims to the test of actual and individual experiment, and thus offers to each a demonstration of its truth. It suspends its claims to human acceptance upon the spiritual miracles of the new creation—upon certain inward emotions or experiences. It said, and still says, If you will try it, you shall know; if you will do his will, you shall know whether it is of God or of man. If you will believe in Jesus, if you will take Christ into your heart, you shall have the witness in yourself. The whole scheme is submitted to actual human experiment, and if it is not from God, you will know it; but if it is from God, you will feel it, for it will accompany itself by its own witness. Christ says, "Come unto me, and ye shall find rest." And this pivotal promise is given to man: "If any man will do, he shall know." It does not say, if the man is a scholar—if he is scientific; but what it says comes right to each and all: "If any man will do his will, he shall know." And containing this promise, the Gospel carried with it a demonstration—a demonstration that came, not before, but after, belief; a demonstration of the spirit; a gracious and soul-satisfying conviction, not created by science, not begotten of the logical understanding, but welling up from the innermost depths of the soul, which is to the trusting one "as a well of water springing up to everlasting life." Glory be to God for this, which seems to me to be its crowning excellence—that if we will

do, we shall know; if we will accept, if we will believe,

"The spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God."

Now let us notice,

II. THE AGENTS.

The agents were the living ministers, not angels, but men—ordinary men, the average man. As Paul said to these Lycaonians, "Men of like passions with you." If you look at the earlier apostles, and especially the original twelve, I think it will be seen that the Master, in selecting them, had reference to something else, something better, than intellectual strength or extra learning. I think it can be shown that, as they were selected from the common, the ordinary walks of life, that, while they were not ignorant men in the objectionable sense of that term, yet they were not, as a whole, above the average. Says Paul*: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." And as Christ did not select angels for this work, because they would have been attended by a celestial glory that might have obscured the divine; and as God will have his glory only shining forth, so he passed by all the shining hosts of heaven, and chose men—men like ourselves, with the same depraved natures, with the same proneness to sin; so, in order that the results might not be attributed to extra talent, nor to learning acquired in the schools, he selected the average man, and sent him forth, depending upon nothing but the presence and power of the truth. True, there were exceptions to this rule. Now and then a master mind appears, such as Saul of Tarsus; but still it was true that the work was carried forward by the earnest and persistent labors of the "average" man. So it has always been in the history of the Church and in the history of Methodism. Though Methodism had its birth in an institution of learning, and Wesley, its great leader, was a

* II. Corinthians, iv: 7.

man of signal ability, yet it entered all classes of society only when it accepted the services and depended upon the efforts of its lay helpers. And so it will ever be. If the Gospel is to triumph everywhere, if this poor sin-cursed world is ever brought to Christ, it will not be through the labors of extraordinary men, for God has not made enough of these to meet the demand; but the work will be done by those who do not possess ten, nor five talents, but to whom the Great Father has intrusted only two, or one. "No talent is too great, no genius is too brilliant, no attainments are too rich, for the work of preaching; but, thank God, average capacity can be trained into such an instrument as God, the Holy Ghost, will employ for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

But there were some things possessed by these men which were, and which always will be, necessary to success:

1. They were men of character. Jesus invited all to come to him, and when they came penitent and contrite, he received and blessed them all. None were so low, and miserable, and degraded, but Christ was willing to receive them into his spiritual kingdom. But when he came to select his apostles—his messengers—and to give them official positions as ministers and teachers, he had regard for character. He selected those whose characters were above reproach. "Character is important to all men, but most of all to ministers of the Gospel. Their great business is to renovate and improve the character of other men. Hence, it is indispensably necessary that they be examples of what they teach." Character may not, in these degenerate times, be essential to the politician, the scientist, the essayist; for, without this, one may be a learned lecturer on astronomy or chemistry; may figure upon the platform before literary societies, and discourse most beautifully upon the beauties of Shakspeare; or may uphold and endorse the opinions of Darwin and Company; but the Church and the world attach high importance to character in the pulpit. There must go out from the desk the impression that

the man is greater than anything he says. Even a heathen could see that one of the necessary qualifications to a good orator, is that he be a good man. Emphatically must this be the case with the Christian orator who would speak the truth as it is in Jesus, and thus win men to purity and goodness.

* * * * * * * * *

2. They were men of industry. They were not idlers. Not one of the twelve nor of their successors, was found by the Savior lounging in the market places among the idlers. They were chosen from among the world's busy workers. They were found by Christ mending their nets, or fishing—actively engaged in one or another vocation, and from these they were called to be his representatives.

3. They were men of experience. I do not mean that they had that experience which comes with years of trials and afflictions; they had that in time, but they had a personal religious experience. They were converted men. The Gospel itself had triumphed over them before they triumphed over the world. As Paul testifies in ii Corinthians: "He hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation." First, they had received this gracious experience of pardon and this joy of reconciliation, and from hearts thus full of divine love, and inflamed with love and pity for others, they spoke to the world—spoke with intenseness of passionate concern, and thus persuaded men. And this personal experience is still necessary to success. A successful ministry must be a converted ministry. Study and learning will not answer as a substitute for this experience. Without this, we shall no more grasp the truth than the sparrow grasps the message passing through the electric wire on which it perches. Without this, we may walk about Zion, and mark her bulwarks; but unless we have this divine change wrought upon our own souls, we cannot enter into the temple of God. We can form no adequate conception of its glory, of the hallowed services which are rendered there to him that dwells between the cherubim, and can neither describe nor recommend them with success to others.

4. They were called men. They were called, not merely to a life of faith in Jesus, but called specially to the work of the ministry. There were others among the followers of the blessed Master, who had character and experience and industry, and who, as faithfully as these, no doubt, discharged their duty in the respective stations in life in which it pleased God to place them; but these men heard the voice of Jesus saying to them' "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Is it not superfluous for me to say, brethren, this personal call is still essential to success? It is the infallible testimony of God's Word that "no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God." There must be this personal individual call. We must be able to say with Paul, "It pleased God to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen." This call must be nothing less than a deep and solemn conviction, and constraint of personal obligation. A "woe is me if I preach not the Gospel," and our ministry can be effective only with such a call from God.

5. They were endued men. With all this precious experience of divine grace in the forgiveness of their sins, with this personal call to the apostleship, something was still lacking. They needed the enduement of power; and this, you remember, was promised them by the Savior. They were Christians before the day of Pentecost. They had the peace of sins forgiven, but yet they had not the enduement of power necessary to the accomplishment of the work assigned them. This enduement was promised by the Savior as he gave them his last commission. They were to tarry at Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high. For this power they waited; and they received it on the day of Pentecost, in the city of Jerusalem. Paul claims to have received this enduement of power. Its effects are seen as men listen to his discourses, and he frequently refers to it in his epistles to the Churches, as he reminds them that he came to them not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in "demonstration of the Spirit and in power." This power was necessary to them, and it is necessary to us. This power

which, as Bishop Simpson shows so clearly and forcibly in his seventh Yale lecture, is not synonymous with conversion, nor with the call to the ministry—this power we must have if we would turn men to righteousness, if we would save souls from death. And this power, we are told, is not found in books, in the teaching of professors, nor in the curriculum of the schools. It is a gift directly from God—a power which Jesus sheds forth upon his ministers. It is not learning, nor rhetoric, nor logic, nor oratory, but it uses these for its one great end. It can burn and shine in the highest periods of the most eloquent preacher, and it can thrill in the accents of the unlettered man. It can use all there is of a human being, and of his acquirements, for the glory of God, and for the advancement of his Church. This qualification the apostles had. They were endued men—endued with power from on high.

Now, these called and endued men were to take this Gospel plan and go forth into the world, and in the presence of all to declare it—to present it to all as the grand panacea for all the woes and ills of the race. Depending upon no gorgeous ritual, upon no enticing words of man's wisdom, upon neither their learning nor their eloquence—using all these, it is true, but taking care not to so ornament the guide-post that the inscription could not be seen; not to so cover the path to the Cross with the flowers of rhetoric that the humblest and most ignorant could not walk therein—they were to go and preach, remembering that Christ had promised, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.

As we see this Gospel plan, and these called and endued men taking it everywhere, and adhering to the Master's orders, knowing nothing among them but Christ and him crucified, is it any wonder that success followed? Is it any wonder that Paul, as he writes to the Corinthians, could triumphantly and gratefully exclaim: "Now, thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place"? The world might wonder at the results, but surely as we see the scheme, the agents and the power, can we not

say that failure was impossible? That just so sure as the darkness is driven away by the rising sun, as cold is forced to flee upon the entrance of heat, so sure was it that, when the Sun of Righteousness should appear, the darkness would flee away; that, when Christ was lifted up upon the Cross, and presented to a lost world as dying for their sins, so sure was it that the hearts of men should be drawn unto him?

And now, in conclusion, "like causes always produce like effects." We have the same blessed Gospel, and the world still needs it; and if we are faithful to declare it, the same blessed results must follow. For all this depends, as we have seen, not on genius, not on brilliancy of talent, but on simple, persevering, earnest fidelity to Christ our Lord. We must be careful to meet the conditions. We must take care of character; we must seek for the enduement of power; we must give ourselves wholly to the work. * * *.

What a fearful responsibility is upon us; and what a glorious work is ours, to preach this Gospel—to hold up Christ to a dying world! Let us, then, so long as God shall give us life and strength—let us go proclaiming this precious Gospel, remembering that he who called us has promised to go with us, and that God hath said, "My word shall not return unto me void." And although we may not have a great name among men, nor all of us rise to positions of prominence in the Church; though we may not even be so useful as we desire, yet it is written that "he that converteth the sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Though you may save only one soul, yet, under God, you shall plant that soul in the ether of glory, and, perchance, as it circles around the throne, it shall bear upon its bosom, as it wheels its eternal courses, your name to be read by the angels of light. And when life's toil is ended and our work on earth is done, the pearly gates shall open, all Heaven shall welcome us, and the Master himself shall say: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter into my joy and sit down on my throne."

PERSONAL SKETCH.

It has been truthfully said, that a boy possessed of energy, application, and health, never fails to develop into a cultured, and generally, a useful man. Colleges and universities do not educate. They only teach boys and young men methods and ways, by which they can, if properly applied, educate themselves in subsequent life. The advantages, however, of a collegiate education are great. A boy who starts out in the world, without the aid of skilled teachers, such as are usually found in our universities and colleges, has a rough road to travel, and has to struggle much harder to obtain an education, and its natural sequence—success—than if he were favored with their assistance.

One of the self-educated, self-made men, who is now in the front rank of the preachers of the West Virginia Conference of the M. E. Church, is the Rev. Winfield C. Snodgrass. He was born in Ritchie county, West Virginia, December 27, 1849. At the early age of five years, he began to attend school, and was immediately recognized as a studious boy—a reputation which has ever since followed him through life. From that time to the present, he has been steadily toiling in the great, broad field of letters, and the consequent result is, a cultured brain, and a large fund of useful knowledge.

At twelve years of age, the subject of this sketch was converted, and united with the M. E. Church, and at once felt himself called to the ministry. When sixteen, he was licensed as an exhorter; and at seventeen he received his credentials as a local preacher. In July, 1867, he was employed as a supply, to assist Rev. Edgar B. Blundon on Middlebourne Circuit; and in March, 1868, he was admitted into the West Virginia Conference. At his own request, in 1871, he was given work in the vicinity of the West Virginia University, in order that he might avail himself of the privileges of that institution. Here he remained for a considerable period, attending the University as a student, but not neglecting his ministerial duties. He selected his own studies, and pursued them with great energy. These were the only educational advantages he ever enjoyed, outside of the district schools, and his methods of private study in his own home.

Brother Snodgrass has filled a number of important appointments, among which, I mention Chapline Street, Wheeling, Morgantown, and Parkersburg—three of the most important stations

in the Conference. God has blessed his ministry with a number of peculiarly powerful revivals; and in church building, debt paying, organizing and solidifying the Church, he has had a large measure of success. In these, and other various ways, he has accomplished a great amount of substantial good to the Church.

For eleven years he preached from notes; but his custom, the last four or five years, has been to leave his notes in his study, and preach without any helps of the kind. The change has been greatly to his advantage, as he now preaches with much more ease, freedom and force. His preaching—always clear and pointed—is marked both by uniqueness and suggestiveness. Originality and power of illustration, unite to give freshness and interest to his sermons. By the study of the best English authors, he has cultivated a literary taste, the legitimate outcome of which is a smooth, easy and forceful style of expression. In all his charges, he is a close student of the feelings, motives, and wants of his people; and his success is largely due to the facility with which reading, travel and associations with men, are made to minister to ascertained human needs.

Such preachers as Brother Snodgrass, are wanted by our best Churches throughout the domain of Methodism.

SERMON XVI.

BY

REV. W. C. SNODGRASS.

THEME:—GOD PRAISED BY HIS WORKS.

TEXT:—"All thy works shall praise thee, O, Lord."—PSALM cxlv: 10.

In their survey of the universe the cynical man, and the infallible boy, see much to be improved. They search the untenanted wilderness, and the expanse of waters, for evidence to impeach the wisdom and benevolence of creation. With critical and solemn indignation they inquire, in the spirit and language of Iscariot, "To what purpose is this waste?" Their doleful sentiment is voiced in Gray's familiar lines:

> "Full many a gem of purest ray serene
> The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
> Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

From this pessemistic complaint, let us turn to the other side of the question, and listen to one who, with vision clarified by faith and hope and love, sees the world as the obedient servitor of the God who made it:

> "God hath his solitudes, unpeopled yet,
> Save by the quiet life of bird and flower,
> Where from the world's foundation he hath set
> The hiding of his power.
>
> "Year after year his rains make fresh and green
> Lone wastes of prairie, where, as daylight goes,
> Legions of light-hued blossoms, all unseen,
> Their beauteous petals close.

"Year after year unnumbered frosty leaves
Expand and darken to their perfect prime,
Each smallest growth its destiny achieves,
In his appointed time.

"Amid the strong enclosures of the hills,
Fixed by his word, immutable and calm,
The murmuring river all the silence fills,
With its unheeded psalm.

"The smallest cloudlet, wrecked in distant storms,
That wanders homeless through the summer skies,
Is reckoned in his purposes and forms,
One of his argosies.

"Where the perpetual mountains patient wait,
Girded with purity before his throne,
Keeping from age to age inviolate
Their everlasting crown,

"Where the long gathering waves of ocean break,
With ceaseless music o'er untrodden sands;
From isles that day by day in silence wake,
From earth's remotest lands,

"The anthems of his praise shall uttered be,
All works created on his name shall call,
And laud and magnify his glorious name,
For he hath pleasure in them all."

The former view smites man with the paralysis of doubt, and issues in despair, defeat, decay and death. It knows no music but a dirge; no poetry but an elegy; no eloquence but complaint; no greatness but in the past; no opportunity but to weep. Its God, if it have one, is a vanishing quantity, imperiled more and more by every scientific discovery, unable to survive the genius of the age, and only spared immediate extinction by the scant courtesy of a few insolent blasphemers.

The latter view is redolent with the perfume of flowers; it puts into man's hand the wand of hope, and teaches him how to transform deserts into gardens and profligates into men; its poetry is mingled pean and prophecy; it keeps pace with the march of intellect; it knows no antagonism with science; the steam is its draught horse, and the lightning its postman; it sees life as one grand opportunity; it is devout in the field, the laboratory, and the market place, as well as in the closet and the sanctuary; it recognizes the Bible and the book of nature as coincident volumes, which together constitute the divine and only universal encyclopedia; its God is immanent in all nature;

the majesty and mercy of his revelations grow upon those who devoutly study him in the natural world and in the world of man; the universe is his temple; all his works praise him.

God's works praise him when they accomplish the purpose of their creation. This truth may be illustrated from the works of men. A watch is intended to keep time. If it does this, it praises the watchmaker. If not, all its quaint and beautiful ornamentation only makes more conspicuous his failure in the essential part of his work. A mirror is intended to give back the image of objects brought before it. It praises its maker only when it casts a true reflection. A painting praises the artist, when its harmonious blending of form and color realize his conception. The highest praise of the farmer's skill, is a bountiful harvest. Expensive equipment, bright and curious implements, splendid barns, and ceaseless activity, are but a mock of agriculture, if the season for reaping be not glad with the shout of the harvesters among the fruitful sheaves. So, any work praises him who performs it, only when it accomplishes his purpose.

If we inquire what end God had in view, in creating the universe, various answers will be received. I shall here dwell upon but two.

I. I shall not, I think, reflect upon the greatness nor the benevolence of the Divine character, in presuming to say that one of the ends in view, in the creation, was God's own pleasure. We know that he has ever been willing to make sacrifices for his creatures. He "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." But is God insensible to the beauties and harmonies of his own creation? Does not the master painter see in his own work, beauties which the untaught eye never beholds and cannot discern? Does not the musical composer hear, in his pieces, a harmony of which rude, untaught ears must forever remain unconscious? Is the architect unmoved by the splendor of his own achievements? Is the orator blind to his own triumphs in the art of persuasion? Can we venture a negative answer to the Psalm-

ist's question, "He that planted the—ear shall he not hear? He that formed the eye—shall he not see?"* John, in his Patmos vision, observed that the four and twenty elders in their worship of him that sat on the throne, said, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."†

I wish distinctly to record, that this view does not becloud with selfishness the glory of God's character. Rather would selfishness dictate the neglect of his lowly creatures. Are they the waste and useless material of creation—the odds and ends from God's great workshop? Is his only concern to get well rid of them? I "have not so learned Christ." Nothing is too small for his notice, too humble for his love, or too commonplace to promote his pleasure. He "clothes the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven." He notes the fall of the sparrow, and counts the hairs of our heads.

Such a God cannot be indifferent to the beauty which the microscope reveals to the delighted naturalist, as he studies the petal of a flower, the vane of a feather, or the structure of hair. Utility there is in all these, but beauty as well. Man's delight in them grows with his knowledge of them. Surely he who knows them fully, finds, in their contemplation, a pleasure which is heightened by the benevolence which overflows toward them. The various parts of God's creation are not to be studied by themselves, but in their relations to each other and to his universal plan. He who would make up an intelligent judgment of a factory, must do something more than peer down the dark smokestack. He who would study a paper mill, must look further than the reeking vat where the pulp is reduced. The scraggy tree may have no beauty in itself, yet be necessary to the completeness and charm of the landscape. So the desert of sand, or the desert of water, the mountain wilderness, or the inaccessible crag, the noisy cataract,

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*Psa. xciv: 9. †Rev. iv: 11.

or the bellowing volcano, may furnish the ground of some one's foolish impeachment of Divine wisdom in the plan of the world; but when these are studied in all their relations to the system of which they form a part, they are found to blend with the universal harmony which praises and pleases the Creator.

II. Another of the ends manifestly had in view in the creation, was the development and education of the human race. Cast upon the world without philosophy, without civilization, without houses, without clothing, without utensils, without skill in handicraft, without the wisdom or the virtue born of experience, man had much to learn.

The brief sojourn of the first pair in Eden, was like a bright dream and only emphasized the numerous and pressing needs of man after his sin. The unknown world which he faced, with all its inhospitality and opposition, was full of influences, helpful to the development of its new inhabitant.

The universe is not self centered. All its wonders, and wealth, and beauty, and variety, and mystery, as well as all the results of human thought and labor, are, as a prophet of this age expresses it, "but the scaffolding wherewith to build a man."

Fallible in judgment, yet sovereign to choose for himself; marring often, by his unskill, the fair and perfect plan of the Divine Architect, man yet builds ever, when he builds at all, along the lines of God's design.

Toward the working out of this divine plan of man's life all the ministries of creation tend. Deny this and his place in the universe is utterly without reason or significance; admit it and the subject is cleared of all its difficulties.

1. By its invitations to conquest the universe is man's perpetual school-master.

The fruit on the tree induced him to develop muscle and judgment in climbing among the branches. Fish and animals stimulated ingenuity and skill in methods and implements of capture. The ascertained fertility of the soil, led to the clearing of the forest, and the pursuit of husbandry. The strength and fleetness

of the larger animals soon pointed out their utility as beasts of burden and travel. The severity of weather led to the construction of tents and houses, and the preparation and use of vegetable and mineral fuel, as well as the making and adaptation of clothing. The order of change in the seasons induced provident forecast and accumulation. Physical suffering stimulated researches in the art of healing. The presence of rivers and seas led to rude, but improving navigation; first, perhaps on a single log, or tree trunk, then upon a raft, afterwards in a canoe, or simple boat of skins; and finally in a craft embodying the idea of a ship, though still far removed from the iron leviathans that now fly in the force of the storm and court not the favor of fickle winds to bring them to their desired haven.

The migrations and intercourse of men made roads, ferries and bridges a necessity, and the science of civil engineering was begun. In the counting of domestic animals and the interchange of commodities, was laid the foundation of mathematical science. The stars kindled their beacon fires to guide benighted travelers. The moon was the periodical servitor of man. The sun was sky-king in the beginning, as now. What wonder at the prominence early given to astronomical study? True, astronomy was long but a system of rude guesses; but out of those guesses there grew a science, which condemns, as inaccurate, a once reliable telescope, whose sole fault is an infinitely small irregularity in the face of its object glass, resulting from the wiping off of unavoidable dust and soot.

The desert, the mountain and the sea defied man's power. But who defied could long remain content? Adventure, discovery, migration, travel, commerce, each taught in the university of the world, and man went to school. There he developed courage, hardihood, genius, self-control—in a word, he found himself.

I might speak at great length of the natural foundation and gradual developement of botany, geology, zoology, meterology and other sciences, by which human faculties have been educated; but the thought is already transparently clear, that God manifestly de-

signed the universe for man's education, whatever other purposes and plans may have entered into his creative thought.

But the educational mission of the universe to man, is not confined to his physical and mental nature. The thoughts and actions growing out of his contact with physical objects and his ascertainment of physical laws, bring him into peculiar relations with his fellow man, so that, whether he wishes or not, he is obliged to grapple with social and moral problems. No people, however uncivilized, has ever been long able to evade certain of the simpler of these social and moral questions. I do not assert the ability of man to work out these problems for himself. On the contrary, I believe the only true and complete solution ever reached, is when God's revelation, on these subjects, is accepted, as the sole and indispensable key to their complete elucidation. But what I say is, that the relation of the physical universe to its human inhabitant is such as to start up social and moral questions which at once quicken the human faculties and emphasize the necessity of a superhuman, super-scientific, super-cosmic revelation—a spiritual revelation from the eternal and Almighty God—a revelation that shall interpret to Pagan and Parsee and Mussulman, the moral blindness and hunger of which his religion is but the symptom and outcry, and then open his eyes to saving truth and graciously feed his soul.

2. By its cheer and inspiration the universe has ministered to man's development, for real growth is not the natural child of energy and despair, but the legitimate offspring of wedded hope and love.

Nature may seem remorseless and exacting, but she is just and stable. He who violates her laws, is pursued and punished; but he who obeys, finds them mighty for his protection and comfort. To the obedient nature's messages are like the invitations to a wedding; but to the disobedient they are like the warrant for the arrest of a criminal. Thus a premium is put upon obedience to law. The violator—be he drunkard, glutton, lecher, sluggard, overworker, or what not

—may justly fear the day of physical as well as moral retribution. But the keeper of the law fears not. The very stability of nature's laws assures him, cheers him, inspires him. He sees in them protection, and helpfulness, because he works along the line of their unerring operation, instead of contrary to it. His efforts are not paralyzed by fear, but quickened by a hope that mounts to assurance and claims an interest in all that exists. For him gravitation binds the universe together with cords, soft as silk, and strong as iron. For him the benevolent seasons march their ceaseless rounds. For him the flowers open their eyes, and the birds swell their morning and evening chorus. We know not how much we owe to these influences, of whose constant presence and ministry we scarcely think. To the prisoner in his solitary cell, and to the imprisoned invalid and his pale watcher, this statement has a meaning and emphasis which the free and strong can only know by the experience of isolation. Yet, in hours of loneliness, or despondency, or anger, have you not sometimes fled from human society to communion with the fields and the flowers, the trees and the birds, the brook and the mountain, or the stars and the sea? How they reproved your anger and selfishness, companied your lonely soul, bore away your despondency, and inspired you with a hopefulness which gave significance and value to your life and work.

Even Byron—proud sad, cynical, debauched, skeptical though he was—could say

> "There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
> There's a rapture on the lonely shore,
> There is society where none intrudes
> By the deep sea, and music in its roar."

The solitary flower that grows in the desert, beyond the sight of other vegetation, may seem lost and undesigned. The skeptic may rail at our God, and sneeringly ask what purpose it can serve there. But a weary, famishing and disheartened traveler, who has given up to die, sees it and says, "If God cares for this little flower, he will care for me." One flower less, and Mungo Park had slept forever in the sands of the African desert. Did not that flower praise its Creator by saving a man? How many of you have done as much?

Thus do natural objects—both animate and inanimate—by Divine appointment speak to us. Many of us feel what we are not gifted to express. William Cullen Bryant was not the first person to learn an inspiring lesson from a "water-fowl," on its long sky-voyage between distant zones. On many a heart deeply had sunk the lesson it had taught, but to him was given the utterance of what others mutely felt,

> "There is a power whose care
> Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,—
> The desert and illimitable air,—
> Lone wandering, but not lost.
> He who, from zone to zone,
> Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight
> In the long way that I must tread alone,
> Will lead my steps aright."

These truths suggest certain practical thoughts, which press forward for expression.

1. If these unthinking objects minister acceptable praise to their Maker, what ministry have we? Shall the unwritten music of the forest swell the praises of the Creator, and angel-voiced man stand stupidly silent in the presence of his God? Shall the mindless wind find coherent and orderly speech, and we, with intellect almost divine, forget the Father from whom is inherited all that differences us from unreasoning beasts, or from the lifeless clods that are turned afield by the gleaming plowshare? Shall nature glorify God by helping to build a man, and we play priest and Levite with a fallen human being, because, forsooth, he does not belong to our sect? Shall nature feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and we be indifferent to the cry of distress? Shall a flower save a man's life, and we care nothing for his eternal destiny? Shall the coral insect build for the long-coming future, and we build only for a lifetime?

2. The power to do is glorified by doing. God's power to create the universe was glorified by so doing. Dwelling alone for ten thousand millenniums could not have brought him glory equal to one day of the world. His glory is not abstract power; that is nothing; but power utilized—benevolently employed—this is the glory and crown of our Lord. We praise

not the Christ who *could* pity, *could* teach, *could* die, *could* save; but the Christ who *did* pity, *did* teach, *did* die, *does* save. So, with men, power is only glorified by its use. You boast your power to abstain from ardent spirits, but do you do it? You ask to be honored because you say you can lead a virtuous life, but do you do so? You have power to keep from profanity, but do you use that power? You are able, you say, to govern your tongue, but do you keep it from slander and gossip, and lying, and filthy speech? You aver your ability to put to the blush many professing Christians, by leading a life of superior moral excellence, but do you do it? Boasting is excluded until power to do has been demonstrated by doing. Do you wish the world to praise you? Leave off telling what you can do, and actually *do* something which the world needs to have done. It will not withhold the palm branch, or the laurel, or the gold, or the applause.

Do you wish to obtain the praise of Almighty God? Cease vaunting yourself in his sight. Use your boasted power in his service. Open your purse, your hand, your eye, your ear, your lips, your heart. Let the full measure of their power act in every open field. You will not lack crown or kingdom or plaudit, for "an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

PERSONAL SKETCH.

One of the foremost young preachers of the West Virginia Conference is George C. Wilding. He was born July 17, 1846, near the town of Radnor, in Radnorshire, South Wales. In May 1851, he came with his parents to America, and settled in Limetown, now Coal Bluff, Washington county, Pennsylvania. About two miles from the village, in a little old log school house, near the banks of the historic Monongahela, young Wilding first attended school. Up a little valley above the village, there was a small Sabbath School held regularly in a humble stone church. It was here the subject of this sketch entered the Sabbath School army. While attending this "Lord's day" school, when about eight years of age, he received his first religious impressions.

While at Coal Bluff he had a narrow escape from an awful death. Wandering among the coke ovens, he accidentally fell into a coke furnace. Had it not been for almost instant aid being rendered, he would have burned to death. As it was, his clothes, hands and face were badly scorched.

When about seven years of age, he, with his parents, visited the city of Pittsburgh. Though nearly thirty years ago, he says he distinctly remembers the emotions of rapture which filled his heart and mind as he, for the first time, looked upon this grand city of forges, mills and tall spires. It was the most wonderful exhibit of grand sights he had ever seen—surpassing in every respect, the expectant dreams of his childhood. He has frequently seen it since, but it is altogether a different city. Twenty years associations with a busy world, bring with them many and varied changes. The step from youth to manhood covers strange ground, and embraces those scenes and events of life which can never be forgotten. Not so when the meridian is reached, and the sun is receding towards the west. Then, time is fleeting, and things we see and hear slip away from us as a dream.

The Wilding family moved from Pennsylvania to Mason county, West Virginia, in July 1855. From his Mason county home, Bro. Wilding entered the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church in March 1872. Of some of his early associations at Mason City, Hartford and New Haven, I allow Bro. Wilding to speak for himself: "Among my school teachers in Mason county I remember with grateful emotions, Sidney M. Campbell, Rev. John W. Perry, of the United Brethren Church, Rev. B. Howell, Daniel Duskey and W. H. L. Rine. When twenty years of age,

I obtained the consent of my father to go to Marietta College for a brief season, and spent a portion of two years there. I entered the employment of Geo. W. Moredock, Esq., of Hartford City, when a boy of ten years, and continued therein until I was past twenty-five. For some years I worked in the mines; aided in building the salt furnace at New Haven—having the exalted position of bringing water for the thirsty men, carrying the tools of the stone masons to the blacksmith ship and back, and occasionally driving oxen and running an engine. In 1863 I entered the store of the Hartford City Coal and Salt Company, where I remained for a number of years. In 1868 I took charge of the Company store at New Haven. From 1865 to 1872, I was bookkeeper for the Union Salt Company at New Haven, in addition to working in the store. I am greatly indebted to Mr. Moredock. He has done a great deal for me, as well as for my good father. Under his inspirations I felt the first strong uprisings of ambition, and therefore longed for an education. * * * * *
I was converted in the little old school house, on the hillside, in New Haven, January 28, 1866, at a meeting conducted by Rev. Jacob Bachtel, of the United Brethren Church. I united with this church and remained therein until January 1867, when I joined the M. E. Church, under the pastorate of Rev. E. W. Ryan, now the Presiding Elder of Wheeling District. In my early relations with the M. E. Church I had a model class leader and friend in Robt. Robinson, who continued as leader up to the time I joined the conference. My home in the church at New Haven, for five years, was very pleasant. I often think of our precious class meetings and prayer meetings, our cheery Sabbath School and instructive preaching services. I remember all my pastors with respect and veneration, and they fully deserve both. They were Revs. E. W. Ryan, J. M. Powell, D. H. K. Dix, and J. B. Feather. About this time I took an active part in temperance work, in the order of Good Templars, and was Grand Secretary of the State for one term—1871–2.

"In March 1872, I arranged to attend the session of the West Virginia Conference, and enter the regular ministry, but was prevented, on account of business engagements, from doing so. I, however, was appointed by Presiding Elder Powell, to take charge of the Nicholas Circuit."

It was upon this Circuit that Bro. Wilding entered upon the duties of a very active and useful life. His first year was a great success. Prior to this time, he had never ridden twenty miles on horseback. Now he was in his saddle almost constantly. I have frequently heard him say that he used to have, while riding through the mountains of Nicholas, visions of horses and saddles as vivid as those of a heavenly kind unveiled to John on Patmos. But this was a part of his ministerial training. "Brush College"—as our mountain Circuits are termed—is in many respects, as important a training as one can get at a theological seminary. During this year, our "circuit rider" held nine protracted meetings, received one hundred and fifty probationers into

the Church, and in the meantime wrote nine hundred letters as Grand Secretary of the Good Templar organization.

Brother Wilding joined the West Virginia Conference at Guyandotte in March 1873, and was sent to Point Pleasant Circuit, where he remained three years. Under his pastoral care, the churches were repaired, a new parsonage was erected, and the membership of the Circuit more than doubled. His next appointment was North Street Station, Wheeling, where he also remained three years. During the term, the Church had two revivals, resulting in one hundred and fifty-five conversions. In October, 1878, he was stationed at Thompson Church, Wheeling Island, where he remained two years. Under his ministry one hundred and ten souls were converted and added to this Church. From Wheeling Island he was sent to Parkersburg Station, next to Fourth Street, Wheeling, the most important station in the Conference. At the close of this pastorate, in October 1881, he was made Presiding Elder of Parkersburg District, which is his present field of labor.

At the October, 1878, session of Conference, held at Parkersburg, Bro. Wilding was elected Conference Secretary, and is still in that important office, notwithstanding the fact that he is a Presiding Elder. It is a rare compliment for a secretary to be continued after he is made a Presiding Elder; but with one accord Brother W. was re-elected to this important station. The writer has heard more than one of our Bishops say, that he is one of the most efficient secretaries in the entire Methodist connection—I am quite sure that I never was acquainted with a better one.

Bro. Wilding's has been a busy life. He possesses unusual energy, and is conscientious in all his work. He ranks high as a minister of the Word, and has already left his impress upon the hills and valleys of his adopted State. His life, thus far, has been a marked success, and his future is bright with promise.

SERMON XVII.

BY

REV. GEORGE C. WILDING, P.E.

THEME:—SOUL SATISFACTION.

TEXT:—They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.—PSALM XXXVI: 8.

The theme of this verse of scripture is the spiritual communion of human souls with God, their divine maker. The teachings are that such communion of the soul with God is eminently and abundantly satisfactory in its character and extent. In order to magnify the theme, and to illume the teachings of the text, the author of this Psalm resorts to the favorite Oriental method of teaching, namely, the figurative or pictorial. At least three quite distinct and widely varying metaphors adorn and beautify these brief lines of Scripture.

The first metaphor is that of a house, in the sense of a tenement, a dwelling, a home. About every well ordered household, every model home, we naturally group the ideas of shelter, protection, rest, comfort, food and friends. The figure implies that a soul in communion with God possesses and enjoys in a spiritual sense, all of the blessings that are represented by these temporal enjoyments of domestic life.

The second metaphor is that of a field. There has been a protracted drouth, and the earth is dry, dusty and parched, under the fierce glare of an Eastern sun. Now, there comes a shower, gentle at first, but rapidly

increasing in volume, and soon the earth is refreshed, drenched, saturated. And to demonstrate the continuance of this moisture, a stream of water is represented as flowing through the midst of the field. The soul outside the pale of communion, is the field suffering the rigors of drouth; the soul in communion with God, is the field refreshed by showers of rain and watered by the flowing stream.

The third metaphor is that of a temple, a sanctuary, a church. In fancy we observe the devout saint entering the earthly courts of the Heavenly King. We notice the eye flash, the bosom heave, and the face glow, as he worships God in his house, in fervent prayer and swelling praise; forgetting the feverish world outside those sacred walls, with all of its cares, burdens and sorrows. As the child of God is blest in the service of the earthly sanctuary, so, the soul in communion with God, is dwelling continually in the spiritual temple, and is steadfastly feasting on heavenly manna, the rarest, choicest spiritual food.

It may be profitable, now, to leave metaphor and figure far behind us, and push forward to the attentive study of this theme and its teachings.

I. WE ARE SO CONSTITUTED, IN OUR COMPLEX NATURE, THAT WE INSTINCTIVELY CRAVE WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR OUR ENJOYMENT AND SATISFACTION.

Perhaps we should here stop long enough to distinguish between what may be termed proper and improper desires or longings. Some of our cravings are, in themselves, proper, Others are, in themselves, improper; while others, still, are proper inside of certain limits or restrictions, and improper outside of these lines of limitation. We may safely conclude that all of our cravings, which, if fully gratified, would injure us, or any other human being are improper; and that all of our cravings, which, if entirely satisfied, would not harm us, or any other person—but, on the contrary, would benefit ourselves, or others, or both—are proper and pure in their character.

It should be a matter of gratitude, that in this era of Christian civilization, we have but little difficulty

in determining between cravings which are pure and proper, and cravings which are impure and improper.

As human beings, we have a many-sided nature, or a nature subdivided into many compartments, or partitioned off into a number of distinct rooms: or to employ another figure, we have a being composed of a number of distinct and peculiar personalities. And in each of these departments there are characteristic cravings, of a pure nature, and each personality has a longing or hungering of its own.

In the physical personality of our being, if that physical life be normal or healthy, there will be at intervals—more or less stated or regular—a hungering for material food. This is undoubtedly a *real* hunger, and nothing but food will satisfy it. Suppose you escort a famishing man through the halls of a famous art gallery, and let him gaze upon rare paintings of luscious fruits and succulent vegetables, and nutritious meats, so true to nature that we are surprised that they do not drop from the canvas, and what is the result? Is his hunger appeased? Nay, but rather heightened. Take him into the epicurean dining hall of a Delmonico; lead him to the head of the great tables freighted heavily with nutritious food and toothsome delicacies. Have him feast his eyes on the tempting vision. Now, is his hunger allayed or even quieted? On the contrary, it is grown ravenous and unmanageable. Paintings and visions of food will not gratify the craving of a hungry man. Nothing but substantial, palpable, material food will satisfy this hunger. When this craving does not return for a considerable space of time, the body pines, fades away and death ensues.

In the social department of our being, if the social nature is normal and active, there will be developed an instinctive craving for society—for intercourse with kindred souls, congenial spirits. This hunger is as real as the first, and will not be satisfied with the shadow for the substance. The rules of good society, as printed in books of etiquette, may be studied for days together; vast crowds of strangers may be met on the street, at any or every hour of the day;

happy groups of people may be observed in the cheerful homes which we pass in our walks; but these are only pictures of society to us. The hunger for society still remains, and nothing but a congenial group, in which we are central figures, will satisfy it. When this craving dies, or is crushed to earth, we have the nunnery or monastery, the nun and monk—terms so distasteful to true Americans, and clustering about an idea so antagonistic to true social life.

In the intellectual personality, if the intellect be healthy and vigorous, there is a craving for information or knowledge of some character. This also is a real hunger. A simple sight of the book of knowledge, to admire the symmetry of its proportions, or the beauty of its superb binding, or to read its great title, would not satisfy the craving of the mind for wisdom. No; the lids of the vast volume must be opened, and the rich treasures it contains spread before the intellect, that it may feast thereon. When this mind hunger is entirely gone, a mental death soon takes place.

The spiritual man in our being, if normal and growthful, also craves for food, hungers for nourishment—for satisfaction. This hunger, as truly as either of the others, is a real hunger that nothing but food will satisfy. Pictures of food, such as moralism or formalism, or ritualism will not appease that hunger. The shell or husk, that enclosed the food, will not do instead of the food itself. None of the modern forms of religion, that omit or exclude a sympathizing Savior, will satisfy a hungering soul. When this hunger perishes, spiritual death soon occurs.

II. THIS INSTINCTIVE HUNGER IS AN ARGUMENT FOR, AND A PROPHECY OF, THE EXISTENCE OF AN ABUNDANT SUPPLY.

In the first mentioned three of these realms, the physical, the social and the intellectual, this argument is demonstrated, and this prophecy is fulfilled. There is the hunger for food and the supply of food to match it; there is the longing for congenial society, and the supply is found in the cheerful circle of friends

there is the craving for mental nutriment, and the supply is furnished by the school, the book, the orator, and nature.

Now, we are left with the craving in the highest domain of all—the spiritual. How is it to be appeased? Is there anywhere a supply?

The proof of this proposition, in the employment of reason alone, cannot be carried to the lofty altitude of demonstration; but it may be made to approximate very closely to its summit. In the use and arrangement of these arguments, we demonstrate the strongest probability of the existence of this supply to gratify the hunger of the soul. The line of reasoning is briefly this:

1. The law of adaptation or fitness. In so far as we have studied the construction of this world, and all pertaining to its government, there are plainly visible marks of intelligent design; everything seems made for a purpose, a definite end; all is closely jointed, and articulates distinctly. There are no missing links here. That a wise Creator should blunder on the tallest plane of his creation is scarcely reasonable. How great a blunder would it be to create this soul-hunger and leave it unsupplied.

2. The character of God. He is represented in the Bible as a being of tenderness, sympathy and affection, and, withal, deeply interested in the progress and welfare of man. Does not the inspired Psalmist say, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."* To create this soul hunger, and then not provide for its supply, would be bitter mockery. God cannot mock his creatures!

3. God's care for animal and vegetable life. In the domain of animated nature, God, thoughtfully and kindly, provides abundant supplies of food and drink. All forms of animal life exist where the food adapted to their needs and wants is found in greatest abundance; and they are provided with a climate suited to their natures and structures; they are furnished with coats of scales or fur or feathers, that adapt them to their spheres; and they are so formed as to fit them

*Psalm ciii:13.

for securing and eating their food. Fish are so constructed as to fit them for deep or shallow water, according to the location of their home. In the world of vegetable life, God provides the elements of life and growth—namely: seed, soil, atmosphere, sunshine, dew, rain, storms and darkness. Plants are adapted to their surroundings, and to the use for which they are intended. Is animal life, or vegetable life, comparable for a moment with soul life?

4. The instinct of animals. Among God's humbler creatures, some are possessed of remarkable instincts. There is the instinct in birds that leads them to make their migratory flights to a warmer clime. They have an instinct that calls for a sunny south, and God has provided the sunny south. The dumb brute that is famishing for food, or dying of thirst, has an instinct that drives it forth for food and drink, and God has provided the supply whither it goes. The beast that is diseased has an instinct that prompts it to seek a remedy, and God has provided that remedy. Would God honor that instinct in animals and mock the instinct in man?

5. The principle in the practice of medicine, that the world contains, somewhere, in some form, a remedy for every disease that man is afflicted with. The mute cry of suffering bodies is met by the Creator with a cure for their ills. Would this good Being be more deeply moved by the cry of a suffering body than by the cry of a hungering soul?

6. The conduct of man. Mankind instinctively act as though they felt within them that the soul could be satisfied. We see them constantly seeking to satisfy this soul hunger on bread that turns to ashes on their lips; we behold them endeavoring to quench soul-thirst at fountains that only intensify it. They are following an instinct blindly and partially, not wisely or fully. May not that instinct, yearning for satisfaction, wisely followed, yet lead them to the true source of supply?

When we step out of the realm of simple reason into the domain of revelation, we leave all uncertainties behind us. We tread firm ground. We have a "thus saith the Lord," for our foundation; and we affirm,

with confidence, that the soul-hunger of humanity is comprehended, appreciated and provided for by the All Father. This hunger is acknowledged as a real experience, in the following intense exclamation of the Psalmist: "O, God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.* In that sweetest of sermons, by that Prince of preachers—the famed sermon on the mount—Jesus Christ promised to satisfy this hunger, in this truly remarkable language: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."† On another occasion Christ affirmed: "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger: and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.‡ The Psalmist speaks of this great satisfaction as an accomplished fact: "For he satsfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."§ How thankful should humanity be for the revealed Word of God!

III. IF WE HONESTLY AND FAITHFULLY FOLLOW THE LEADINGS OF THESE INSTINCTIVE HUNGERINGS, WE SHALL REACH THE WISELY PROVIDED SUPPLY.

God not only, wisely and kindly, provides the supply to appease all proper desires, but he has created within us an instinct, that is well nigh infallible, in leading us to the source of this supply. This may be illustrated by the migratory instincts of birds, referred to a few moments since. They instinctively yearn for a southland, and, implicitly following that instinct, it directs them to that southland. It is noticeable, again, in the instinct of direction, with which animals are endowed, and, following the impulse of that instinct, it leads them to the desired point in their journeyings. When animals are sick they have an instinct that there is a remedy, and following that instinct, they find the desired remedy. These illustrations could be greatly multiplied were it necessary.

In the physical department of our being we hungered for food, and, following that instinct of hunger, we were speedily directed to a supply of that which

*Psalm lxiii: 1. †Matthew v: 6. ‡John vi: 35. §Psalm cvii: 9.

we most needed. The instincts of a hungry man will lead him infallibly to food.

In the social department of our being we had a longing desire for pleasant and agreeable society, and, our instinctive yearnings led us into the midst of such society, and we were satisfied.

In the mental department of our being we had constant cravings for knowledge, and the instinct of the mind carried it to the fountain of learning, and the burning thirst was swiftly allayed.

Reasoning by analogy, would it not seem exceedingly reasonable that instinct would be as reliable in the upper realm of our being as in these lower departments? That if we were safely guided by instinct in the physical, the social and the intellectual departments of our being, we would be fully as safely guided by the higher instincts of the soul. If these lower instincts are so wonderfully honored by the Almighty One, we may rest assured that these mute, unutterable yearnings of the soul for rest, peace, comfort—in a word, satisfaction—if faithfully followed, would most certainly lead us to the divinely provided supply.

There is, however, this difference between satisfying this hunger, and those referred to in the lower departments of our being: the physical, the social and the mental cravings may be fully satisfied on the ordinary plane of human life—or, at any rate, on a moderately elevated plane of human life. But man has demonstrated that this hunger of the soul cannot be appeased on the summit of the loftiest altitudes of human life. All of life's earthly avenues have been trodden in vain, and man has returned to the point of beginning, as thoroughly unsatisfied as when he entered them.

Let us now add revelation to reason, and contemplate a soul that is fairly well educated in the primary principles of salvation: a soul that comprehends its condition fully—the greatness of its guilt, its vast moral distance from God, the enormity of its peril, the importance of reconciliation with its Maker, and the advantages of communion with God. Enlightened by the Book, touched by the Spirit, there springs up with-

in this soul an instinctive hunger for rest—for satifaction—for God. If all false shame is extinguished, and all evil suggestions and temptations are brushed aside, and the true interests of the soul studied, this instinct of the soul will be obeyed. Following confidently this instinctive craving, the soul goes by and beyond self and human friends; sweeps past the world, and even the human church; it cannot be satisfied on pleasure, indulgence, friendship, moralism, formalism, ritualism, or anything strictly earthly or human. This spiritual instinct directs it swiftly and surely to the feet of the Holy One. The conditions of salvation are met—complied with; and the trembling penitent is fully forgiven, the soul purified, the tears all kissed away, and the returned and welcomed prodigal is pressed closely to the tender bosom of the forgiving Father. The soul has been directed, by its infallible instinct, to the divine source of supply, and is restful and happy in the glow of its discovery.

IV. THE SOUL THAT HAS FOUND THIS SOURCE OF DIVINE SUPPLY IS ABUNDANTLY SATISFIED THEREWITH, AND DOES NOT GO ELSEWHERE SEEKING SATISFACTION.

When I speak of being abundantly satisfied when our spiritual instinct leads us to God, I do not mean to imply that this satisfaction necessarily carries with it the idea of joyous demonstration, or physical fervor, or delicious ecstacies, or soft, dreamy raptures. These may or may not attend the soul's discovery of God. But they are not *unusual* appendages, and frequently are attendant emotions, of that wondrous transition; but, not properly, elements of the soul's satisfaction. There are many phases of Christian experience at this period of the new life. Suppose we append a few specimens. Here is one of the rapturous, ecstatic sort, written by Charles Wesley, full one hundred years ago:

"O, the rapturous height
Of that holy delight,
Which I felt in the life-giving blood!
Of my Savior possessed,
I was perfectly blessed,
As if filled with the fullness of God."

Here is one expressing quiet satisfaction, written by Philip Doddridge, more than one hundred and fifty years ago:

"Now rest, my long divided heart;
Fixed on this blissful centre, rest;
Nor ever from thy Lord depart,
With him of every good possessed."

Let one more suffice. This also was written by Charles Wesley, and expresses a sense of safety and confidence:

"My God is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for his child;
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And 'Father, Abba Father,' cry."

How truly has Paul expressed it: "Now, there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."*

In the lower realms of our complex being we may not only have enough to satisfy us, but more than enough; we may not only attain to satisfaction, but to satiety. When we are ravenously hungry, we may not only eat till our hunger is fully appeased, but until we are surfeited with food. We may live so constantly in society, and so overdo social life, as to grow tired of it, and long for solitude. We may so feast upon knowledge that the brain tires, the nerves become unstrung, the blood grows turgid, and the system relaxes; so that we, weary of books, and long for the fresh air, the leafy forests, the green fields and the bright sunlight. But soul hunger is on a higher plane. It is a paradox. We are satisfied and yet constantly hungering. A surfeit or satiety, in this realm, is an impossibility. Bernard of Clairvaux beautifully expressed this thought, in a hymn written more than eight hundred years ago:

"Insatiate to this spring I fly;
I drink and yet am ever dry;
Ah! who against thy charms is proof?
Ah! who that loves, can love enough?"

Having found satisfaction in Christ does not imply, much less teach, the doctrine that we are to for-

*I. Corinthians, xii:4-6.

sake all the ordinary walks of human life, for the purpose of devoting ourselves and our time to the contemplation and service of Christ. Being satisfied with Christ we do not retire from domestic life, nor from congenial society, nor from business activities, nor from literary pursuits, nor from educational enterprises, nor from philanthropic efforts, nor from reform movements. No; thank God, no! We take Christ into our hearts, and being satisfied in him, and with him, we are better fitted to enter all of these spheres just mentioned, and all the other avenues of life that are honorable and pure, than we were before; and all the callings of secular life are hallowed, and made sacred by taking Christ into them.

But, having found complete satisfaction in Christ, we have been delivered from that sickly, morbid craving for sinful pleasures and worldly amusements, that has so constantly controlled us hitherto. Now, we are restful, quiet, contented and satisfied. What the soul has been seeking, hither and thither, it has found at last in Christ, and seeks no farther in other directions.

It may be asserted that not all professed Christians do possess this sense of satisfaction that Christ promises, and that the Christian may enjoy; and that some Christians frequently, indeed almost constantly, may be found on the level of the world, seeking pleasure where worldings seek it. I presume this is measurably true—slightly exaggerated, perhaps—but still it must be admitted to be true—too true, and as sad as it is true.

Communion with God, in its character is voluntary, in so far as we are concerned. This communion was entered into of our own free, unfettered choice; we may withdraw at our own untrammeled volition. There is nothing compulsory about its continuance.

While the communion is maintained the satisfaction abides. When the communion is broken, instantly the satisfaction ceases to flow, and the soul is filled with disquiet and unrest, and becomes ill at ease. Then, in this dissatisfied state, comes that morbid, abnormal longing for the vanities, frivolities,

pleasures and amusements of the world, that is occasionally observed among professed Christians.

To see followers of our Lord Jesus Christ in the ball room, the opera, the theatre or the circus, or at wine parties, or in saloons, or on Sabbath excursions, is, in itself, always an unpleasant spectacle to one who magnifies the sacredness of a Christion life. But, engaging openly in these sinful pleasures is not so sad a thing as the state of heart that drives them into these channels. In the majority of such instances, these professed Christians are guilty of apostacy before they become guilty of dancing, drinking aud theatre going. The gravest charge is not that they disgrace the Church of Christ by mingling with the world in its sinful pleasures, but that "They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."*

If, on the other hand, the communion with God is maintained inviolate, the satisfaction of soul abides in its abundance, and all sinful pleasures and improper amusements are cheerfully eschewed—freely given up for the sake of him, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world."

*Hebrews vi:6.

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. John Rhey Thompson, A. M., was born in Carrollton, Ohio, March, 14th, 1852. He attended the district school, the Academy of the town, the Rural Seminary at Harlem Springs, Ohio, and graduated from Mount Union College, at Alliance, Ohio, as Bachelor of Arts, in 1871. He therefore entered upon the duties and realities of life with a cultured mind; his scythe was keenly ground, and he has since then been swinging it most successfully in the cause of truth.

Brother Thompson was converted under the labors of Rev. J. R. Roller, and united with the M. E. Church, February 6, 1868. He entered the Pittsburgh Conference in 1871, immediately after his graduation from college, and remained in it two years. In 1873, he was transferred to the West Virginia Conference, and stationed at Chapline Street M. E. Church, Wheeling. He remained in this station three years, and in 1876, was stationed at Morgantown, the seat of the West Virginia University. After preaching at Morgantown nearly a year, in January, 1877, he was elected President of the West Virginia University, which office he held four years.

The position came to him unsought, and he discharged the duties connected with it, in the most acceptable manner. Though less than twenty-five years of age when called to preside over the State's highest school of learning, he was, nevertheless, a ripe scholar, and seemed to possess those other requisites of character necessary to manage an institution of this character. From the day he took charge of the University, it seemed to start anew, and up to the close of his term as President, its growth was continuous—indeed, unprecedented. During the four years of Bro. Thompson's Presidency, the number of students at the University more than doubled. He delivered addresses on the subject of education in all of the principal towns in the State, and aroused the people to the importance of furnishing their children with collegiate educations. These addresses were masterful productions, and made for President Thompson a reputation throughout West Virginia, as a platform speaker, superior to any other gentleman who had ever presented this and kindred subjects to our people.

President Thompson is an orator—an eleoquent man; but his is not a stultified or strutting eloquence to please the ear; it is the eloquence of nature, of thought, of sentiment, of feeling—the only eloquence that can reach the heart. As President of our

University, he left his impress upon the minds and hearts of hundreds, and even thousands, of the young men of West Virginia, which will influence them through life.

While in charge of the University, in October, 1879, he was elected a delegate to the General Conference of the M. E. Church, which held its session in Cincinnati the month of May following. President Thompson was the youngest white member of that larger body of representative men ; and yet, his superior talents enabled him to take an active part in the proceedings of the Conference.

He was one year editor of the *West Virginia Educational Journal*, a large weekly newspaper, devoted to the educational interests of the State. This journal was a powerful auxiliary to the University ; but the duties of President were too onerous to allow him to continue his editorial position longer than one year. For a number of years he has been a regular contributor to the press in various localities—always writing articles which were read and which influenced men in the direction of philanthropic and reformatory work.

In March, 1881, President Thompson resigned his position at the University, was transferred to the New Jersey Conference, and stationed at Hedding Church, JerseyCity, where he is now laboring acceptably to a large congregation of appreciative hearers.

While President Thompson did not lack success in the educational field, still the broadest field for the display of his talents, lies in the pulpit. As a preacher he possesses unusual pathos and power. He is one of the brightest men of his age the writer ever knew ; and I hazard nothing in saying that Providence has a wide field of usefulness in reserve for him.

SERMON XVIII.

BY

REV. JNO. R. THOMPSON, A.M.

THEME.—THE USE AND ABUSE OF THIS WORLD.

TEXT.—"Use this world as not abusing it."—1. Cor. vii: 31.

In the moral and religious history of mankind, two great forces or currents have appeared contending for the supremacy. Now one, and now the other of these forces, has prevailed to the almost entire exclusion of its rival. I will not be far from the truth when I denominate them as the ascetic spirit and the worldly spirit. The worldly spirit culminated in Greece in the time of Pericles, and in Rome in the time of Augustus. In both nations, the period of the supremacy of worldliness was the beginning of the decline of their vigor and power. The causes were in operation in the time of Pericles, which rendered Greece an easy prey to Philip of Macedon, and Gibbon's Decline and Fall properly begins with the close of the Augustan age. The spirit of asceticism began to creep in the Christian Church toward the close of the third century, became dominant and controlling in the fifth, and thenceforward was supreme for almost a thousand years. The ascetic spirit conquered in England during the time of Oliver Cromwell, and had its fitting culmination in the prohibition of Christmas festivities. The restoration of the Stuarts under Charles II. introduced the spirit of worldliness and pleasure, the worship of vice, if it only were clad in the garments of beauty.

The text incisively condemns both the ascetic and the worldly spirit. In opposition to the former it says, "Use this world." In opposition to the latter, it says, "Do not abuse this world." Observe the healthfulness of Paul's religious spirit. It is neither fanatical nor sensualistic. We have a right to this world, but we are not to allow it to destroy our spiritual instincts. Not the slightest trace of the dark and corrupting spirit of asceticism is to be found in Paul, and yet there never was a man so utterly unworldly, so far removed from earthliness, so akin to the spirit of Jesus Christ. If ever you shall become weary of theological hair-splitting, if ever you turn away in disgust from ecclesiastical asceticism, if ever you shall become victims of a soulless materialism, have recourse, I beseech you, to the writings of St. Paul. They are natural, cheerful, beautiful and attractive. Christ and Paul—not their fallible human intepreters—shall ultimately bring men to a reasonable religious faith and life.

This world has been abused by the intense cultivation of a narrow and ignorant religious spirit concerning the future life. It is a discouraging fact that man will persist in abusing his best blessings. Nothing has been more precious to the weary race than the solemn hope of immortality. As the heavens overarch the earth, so the great life of the hereafter overhangs and perfects this fleeting, evanishing existence. But men have been so anxious about this fuller life to come, they have so absorbingly thought of it, they have dreamed so much of its surpassing glory, they have painted so many pictures of it, they have so lost themselves in the contemplation of its ineffable experiences, that they have scorned, derided, contemned this present life. They have seemingly despised its humble, necessary every-day duties. To be meek, to be kind, to be thoughtful of others, to be willing to perform even menial offices for the imperfect and crude men and women in this actual world—all this and more they have forgotten. They were to be kings and priests unto God in the heavenly sphere. Why, then, should they content themselves with the obscure and in-

significant duties of this prosaic world? They resemble the boy who is ambitious of becoming a merchant prince, but despises a store room and the duties of an under-clerk. There are no princedoms either on earth or in heaven for such men. Let us not forget to prepare for the other life of the soul, but let us also remember that the best preparation we can make is to faithfully, kindly and unweariedly discharge the duties devolving upon us in this present life.

God meant something when he created this world, and established its manifold economies. This world is not a mistake. It was not made on a venture. It is not the devil's world, stolen from God and ruined after he had finished it. The experiences of this world are all valuable and necessary. Our environment here is absolutely necessary to our education and culture. This world is full of evidences of Intentionality. It was thought out by a great Thinker. It is God's world. Our chief business just now is with this world. We ought to know its laws, and their influence over us and human civilization. It is the height of impiety either to refuse to know or obey the laws of the globe which we inhabit. We grossly insult its Maker when we despise it, villify it, refuse to read its revelations, or seek to hide from ourselves the wisdom and beneficence of its economies. If I should write a book, and send you a copy with the good wishes of the author, and you should give it a respectable place in your library, but never read it, would I not have just ground for offence? In this world of ours, we have a book of God's. Every object on it is a letter, and it contains a literature most solemn, most sublime, most precious. This book men have forgotten, yea, at times despised, yea, at times they have denounced those who were trying to read it as irreligious and infidel. But to read the great book of Nature, to study its facts, to ascertain its laws, to admire its beauty, to extol its wisdom, to imitate its impartial and unwasting beneficence, is our high and sacred duty.

1. Consider the use and abuse of this world in the creation, conservation and distribution of wealth. Concerning the accumulation of wealth, the ascetic

says, "Seek it not. Money is a great evil. Despise wealth as unworthy the pursuit of an immortal man." The worldling says, "Get rich at all cost, at any hazard. Money is the greatest good of life. Seek for something that will bring comfort in this world." Asceticism takes on another form, and, once in the possession of wealth, denies itself all the comforts that wealth can procure. Worldliness is prodigal of its possessions, and scatters with a reckless and improvident hand. Asceticism refuses its wealth to what it calls profane or secular enterprises, and devotes it all to ecclesiastical purposes. If one-half the wealth employed to erect the splendid cathedrals of Europe had been devoted to the education of the people, long ere this time standing armies would have been abolished, poverty would be exceptional, and superstition no longer synonymous with devotion. Christianity, the perfection of reason, says, "Make money honestly and then use it wisely." We are to make money, not to be enslaved by it, but to make it our slave. A money-maker is not a sinner above all men. To be a creator and distributor of wealth is to perform a noble and honorable part in the world. We may use or abuse wealth just as we elect, but herein let us remember that we are to "use this world as not abusing it."

2. Let us see how we may so use this world as not to abuse it in the experiences of sorrow and suffering. The existence of suffering is one of the insoluble mysteries of this world. The genesis of sorrow and suffering is absolutely inexplicable. No man can explain it. No system of philosophy has given any rational account of it. No system of theology has fully satisfied the human reason in regard to it. Why our gracious Father, the God and Father of our Lord Juses Christ, should permit such vast waves of sorrow to roll over the human race, no man has yet been able to tell. Here "we see through a glass darkly." Only in the more perfect knowledge of Heaven will we honestly and intelligently say, "Just and true are all thy ways, thou King of saints."

We inherit suffering in all its forms. Modern science is every day demonstrating the absolute truth-

fulness of the Scripture declaration that the iniquities of the father shall be visited upon his children even to the third and fourth generation. Physical pain, a weak constitution, a vitiated nervous system, a predisposition to consumption, impaired digestive organs are constantly being bequeathed to innocent and unfortunate children. Men are born to insanity, to melancholy, to morbid and vicious imaginations. Social ostracism and disgrace are not infrequently the only legacy guilty parents transmit to their unhappy offspring. We add to our inherited sources of suffering all the misery we are constantly bringing upon ourselves by ignorant and wilful violations of natural, social and moral laws. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward."

The practical question with which we have to deal in the stern conflicts of life, is not, how sorrow came into the world, but how may we so use it as not to abuse it? We abuse sorrow when we allow it to harden us, rendering us callous and indifferent to the sorrows of others. Stoicism was simply brutal insensibility to suffering. Christianity, in Paul's time, was the ability to "rejoice in tribulations," as working in us a higher, rarer, heavenlier type of character. We abuse sorrow when it drives us to despair of the divine goodness. Many there are, that in hours of suffering and overthrow have cursed God and died. Man can commit no greater sin than to cease to believe in the infinite and unwasting mercy. We abuse the sorrow of the world when we permit it to drive us to abnormal methods of getting rid of it. Men seek to drown their sorrows and forget their sufferings by resorting to the use of intoxicating liquors, by plunging headlong into the wildest dissipation. Oh, if ever the cup of suffering is handed you to drink, if ever the sunny landscape of life is overspread with ominous clouds, if ever you shall be called upon to tread the wine-press alone, do not debase your manhood by seeking to forget your sorrows in the wild delirium of intoxication! People are sometimes rendered whining, complaining querulous by little disappointments and vexations. Man was made

to do and be something more than a chronic grumbler. Do not go through this world scattering groans, and sighs and whines, and bewailings on every side. Carry a genial, hopeful joy-spreading spirit. Let smiles and sunshine follow in your wake. Do not permit the raspings and irritations of this world to rob you of fellowship with the bright and cheerful side of life. We use sorrow when by it we are warned from evil courses, and are led to reformation of life. Pain is often the forerunner of virtue and a true manliness. We use sorrow when it inspires us with a tender and all-embracing sympathy with our fellow sufferers. Proud, merciless, self-contained men learn in the school of suffering how to be kind, tender, considerate, compassionate. Suffering, meekly borne, uncomplainingly endured, so purifies, enriches, clarifies the spiritual nature as to render us true interpreters of the profound mystery of the Incarnation and the Cross. From any point of view of the logical understanding, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, his sublime passion, his vicarious death, seem unworthy of a God. How to reconcile such an apparent humiliation on the part of a Being of almighty power and infinite resources, is a task too great for the natural reason. Geology throws no interpreting light on this great mystery. You may be profoundly versed in all philosophy, and yet the Cross will stagger you. You may be a botanist, a chemist, a linguist, a mathematician, a *literatteur*, and never penetrate into this Holy of Holies. But in some hour of royal suffering, when you are sweetly and uncomplainingly bearing the burdens of others, doing it bravely, manfully, self-forgettingly, then how real, how certain, how rational, how divine the great redemption of Jesus Christ. Blest the sorrow that enables us us to read the secret of the Lord. Sacred the suffering that joins us in a holy fellowship with our Divine Redeemer. He only can interpret Christ who has in some measure drank in his blessed Spirit.

3. Few persons have learned so to use this world as not to abuse it in the matter of pleasure, joy, amusement, happiness. Man was evidently designed for happiness. His head was not given him to ache, but

to be clear and strong. Every sense of the body—the eye, the ear, the taste—was intended to be an avenue of pleasure. Every faculty of the mind—perception, reflection, judgment, memory, conception, imagination, reason—all are exquisitely adapted to be joy-producing. There is a susceptibility of the soul that may not bring us the serenest delight. The world we live in was just as evidently framed to bring us happiness. Pleasant light for the eyes, sweet sounds for the ear, pure air for the lungs, scenes of glorious beauty for the æsthetic faculty, facts for the perceptive faculty, truth for the conscience, law for the reason, all betoken the Divine benevolence. They then abuse this world who deny our right to be happy in it. They would be wiser than God. They would impute malevolence to a Father's heart. They would confound piety with gloom, reverence with fear. We are not to be deceived. There are as many devils behind a solemn face as a laughing countenance. Pious forgers are nearly always solemn. It is not a trifling employment of time to amuse ourselves. The great workers of the world have been cheerful men, full of vivacity, raciness, sprightliness. No man knows how to work up the maximum of his power that does not understand the art of resting. Luther and Macauley were great workers and great laughers. Men work better under the inspiration of hope than under the tyranny of fear. When we are in splendid health, when our faculties are fully awake, when every power within us is thoroughly aroused, when the magnificent soul proudly marches to conscious victory, then we are happy and then we are strong.

Equally do they abuse the world who affirm that happiness is to be sought for its own sake, independent of all higher considerations. Happiness is valuable as it leads to goodness. Our highest end is moral goodness. Greater and nobler than the capacity to be happy is the capacity to be pure. We are made for righteousness. We are partakers of the divine nature. Never are we to seek pleasure of the body, of the appetites, of the passions, at the sacrifice of the reason, the conscience, and the moral sentiments. At all

cost, though our bodies rot in dungeons, or burn at the stake, we are to seek the testimony of a good conscience. The supremacy of reason over the passions and appetites must be maintained despite all the fascinating allurements of seductive vice. We may miss fame, we may miss ease, we may miss wealth, we may miss all the lower forms of pleasure; but we must not miss that holiness and purity without which we cannot discern God.

Learn then to use this world, and do not allow it to use you. In all its activities, in all its experiences, in all its studies, in all its pleasures, in all its sorrows, in all its sharp transitions from the mist-covered valley to the radiant sunlit mount, be superior to it. The world has used man. Its storms have frightened him. Its earthquakes have terrorized him. Its thunderbolts have caused him to tremble with superstitious awe. Its exuberant fertility has enervated him. Its manifold forms of life have bewildered his reason. Its majestic and sublime phenomena have made him the slave of driveling superstition. It shall be so no longer. God made man to be the ruler of this world. He hath crowned him with glory and honor. He hath set him over the works of his hands. He hath put all things in subjection under his feet.

Above all, use this world as the stepping-stone to the next. It is a prophetic world. It suggests and necessitates a higher and better world. There is no beauty here, in flower, or cloud, or star, that is not prophetic of an unseen beauty beyond. There is no love here, in child, or maiden, or mother, or martyr, that does not point to the immortal love that shall outweary mortal sin. All things in nature and human life confirm the testimony of Revelation that we complete beyond, what we begin here. This world is a school house, and men and women are the pupils. For what purpose do we painfully learn our lessons and slowly acquire our culture, if there be no life commensurate with the preparation? There is such a life. It is ours if we but strive for it. We win it by faithful, honest, loving action in the life that now is.

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. James Archer Fullerton, D.D., was born in County Armagh, Ireland, May 28, 1850. His parents—who are still living in Belfast, Ireland—were then, and are now, members of the Methodist Church. His father, for nearly half a century, filled positions of trust as an official member of Wesleyan Methodism. The Rev. John Wesley baptised his maternal grand-mother, and preached in her father's house.

Dr. Fullerton has three brothers and one sister. One of his brothers is a member of the Irish Conference, and is always appointed to important stations. Another brother in Ireland, is a local preacher of twenty-five years standing. The third, is a physician practicing his profession in this country. His sister was married to a local preacher in Ireland, and is now a widow, her husband having recently passed away.

Dr. Fullerton's early training and surroundings were thoroughly Methodistic, as may be gathered from the forgoing statements. At the age of seventeen, he was converted, and commenced to preach immediately thereafter. He received a liberal education, both in the town of his nativity, and in the city of Belfast, to which his parents removed, when he was very young.

In the autumn of 1871 he was married to Miss Annie J. Barrett, of his native county, and soon afterwards, with his young wife, came to this country. Acting on the advice of Bishops Janes and Simpson, he joined the West Virginia Conference in March, 1872, and has since served the following churches as pastor: Evansville, two years; Monongalia, one year; Oakland, Md., two years; Volcano, three years; Moundsville Station, three years; and is at present stationed at Charleston, as pastor of the State Street M. E. Church.

He was stationed at Glenarm, in Ireland, before emigrating, and was the first resident Methodist preacher in that beautiful seaside summer resort; and would have entered the work of the ministry permanently there, but for a belief long held, that in the New World he could be more useful and find a better field of labor.

He is a firm believer in American institutions, and lost no time in becoming a naturalized citizen, that he might the more consistently take an active interest in whatever relates to the good of either the State or Church.

Dr. Fullerton is one of the most promising preachers of his age in the entire connection. He, as already stated, has been well and carefully educated for the ministerial profession, and he possesses those essentials of character which never fail to develop real manhood. He is fluent in speech; his rhetoric is perfect, and his logic is convincing. He is popular, practical and clear, and never fails to entertain and instruct his auditors.

SERMON XIX.

BY

REV. J. A. FULLERTON, D.D.

THEME:—METHODISM.

TEXT:—"What hath God wrought?"—Numbers xxxiii:23.

For convenience sake, I will adopt the following topical divisions in this discourse, namely: *Methodism, Historical, Doctrinal, Practical, Aggressive and Suggestive;* and under these titles group togther a few of the most prominent points of interest in our Church polity, hoping thereby to lead the hearer forward to subsequent study for himself, so that he may become better acquainted with the greatest religious movement of modern times; and recognize easily the hand of God in arousing and keeping alive principles, which we believe are adapted in the highest sense to the need of the human heart.

As an introductory question, we inquire, What is Methodism? It is Christianity alive and in earnest, and where it is found indolent or asleep, merely bearing the forms of our system, it is no longer Methodism, but only a spurious imitation. The world is its chartered parish, like its sainted founder it desires to have a league offensive and defensive with every soldier of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a system of exclusive barriers, urging in vain the unchristianizing of every other denomination—it has other work of higher import to do.

It possesses the broad, deep spirit of true Catholicity, and recognizes in all believers members of the household of faith. It aims at the speedy removal of superstition, idolatry and all intellectual benightedness. It advocates the claims of men as men, and gives to Caesar his rightful inheritance. It claims for the Creator the ultimate allegiance of the world; nor does it propose to use any unfair means in this conquest, not daring to use the illogical assertion that the end attained will justify any means that may be used. It seeks rather to inspire the heart, ennoble the life, and lead its friends to abstain from all appearance of evil.

Methodism—what is it? It is a system of religion declaring—"not by might nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord of hosts," and "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," remembering as instanced in its history that the weak things of this world are often used to confound the things that are mighty. It believes in Christianity as the only power extant that can reform and purify our earth, and that this power, under God, is the acknowledged leader of science, civilization and commerce. As harbinger of these, Methodism proposes to unfurl its honored banner on every citadel of every nation, and exclaim, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Upon this platform of principles we take our position; under this standard we hear the watch cry go forward, "for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

I. METHODISM, HISTORICAL:

Its doctrines, we hold, are as old as the Christian era, and were taught by the man Christ Jesus; but Methodism proper as a system under this title did not come into public requisition until the eighteenth century, and then briefly as follows: John and Charles Wesley, the founders of Methodism, were the sons of a clergyman in the Established Church of England. These men when very young were elected to high position in the leading university of that country. They

were scholars of no ordinary type, even at an early age. They were also members of the English Church, and were untiring and indefatigable in their efforts to advance the cause of religion. In this respect, as in others, they far exceeded their fellows. It was while they were yet students at Oxford that the designation, Methodist, was applied to them; and it is wonderful to observe that a title, once given in derision, has now become the peculiar distinction of one of the largest bodies of Christians in the world. It was even so with the designation "Christian," first given to the disciples at Antioch, as some declare with "hatred loathing and scorn," now the passport to the highest honors and the chief glory of our present civilization. John Wesley and his coadjutors were called Methodists, because they used careful methods in their lives, studies and general distribution of time in ministering to others; and when they became leaders, in a great ecclesiastical revolution, the familiar name was given to their societies. When Mr. Wesley began his ministry, in the early part of the eighteenth century, he was greatly shocked to discover the deplorable carelessness and negligence of the Church, both among the ministry and laity. He at once resolved to spend his life in an effort to "purify the household of faith" of all its idols and abuses. The manner in which he and his brother performed their part, may be found in any of our interesting histories, or better still in Mr. John Wesley's own journal.

Like unto his divine Master, Mr. Wesley led a different life, was subject to the vilest persecutions, in all of which he displayed a spirit of heroism and moral courage, than which a brighter has not been known since the days of his great Original. In the latter part of the year 1739, Mr. Wesley organized the first Methodist society, composed of eight or ten persons, who were deeply convinced of sin, and to these were added daily such as made application. Subsequently the society was divided into classes, and one person in each class appointed leader; but over all Mr. Wesley was general Superintendent, assisted by his brother Charles. In the early part of their labors, none

but ordained clergymen were permitted to preach; but soon the inadequacy of their strength to the great enterprise in which they were engaged, made it necessary for them to make suitable selections from the ranks of the laity, and to employ them as helpers in their work; and thus was accomplished forever the fact of lay preaching. The societies organized by Mr. Wesley in England, Ireland and Scotland, remained in fellowship with the Established Church until his death. Soon after which they separated from the Church and became a district denomination, under the supervision of one President for Great Britain and Ireland; and as they increased in numbers, reaching continental Europe, and the colonies abroad, other conferences were formed, and Presidents appointed—all, however, subject to the authority and government of the Wesleyan body in England. Methodism in connection with the British Conferences remains substantially the same in government and polity generally, as at the time of Mr. Wesley's death; but it is now one of the most powerful non-conformist bodies in England, strong in intellectual force, famous for its orators and treated with great respect and reverence by the masses of the people, as well as by the clergy.

The germ of Methodism was carried to this country in the year 1766, by Philip Embury, a local preacher, from Ireland. He began to preach in the city of New York, and soon formed a small class of his own countrymen. The same year Thomas Webb, an officer in the British army, and also a local preacher, preached in a hired room near the Barracks. About the same time Robert Strawbridge, another local preacher, from Ireland, settled in the State of Maryland, and organized several societies. The first Methodist church was built in New York in 1768 or 1769, and in the latter year Boardman and Pilmoor, two itinerant preachers from England, were sent over by Mr. Wesley to care for the newly formed churches. These were the first traveling Methodist preachers in America. Towards the close of 1771, Asbury and Wright came over from England. The former was the first person ordained Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church on Ameri

can soil; and this was done by Dr. Coke, at the first General Conference in 1784, who was himself set apart for the office of Superintendent by Mr. Wesley, and put in charge of the American societies.

When Dr. Coke came across the ocean to enter upon his mission, he carried with him letters of authority, that he might ordain to an office similar to his own, Francis Asbury, who was already in the field. It may be proper to observe here that in the British Conferences, and others affiliated therewith, the Presbyterial form of orders and ordination prevails almost intact; but it was deemed advisable in devising forms for American Methodism to accept Episcopal modes in preference to Presbytèrial. With this understanding, however, that no third order in the ministry be created, "but an office rather for convenience," to be known for the benefit of the Church as General Superintendent or Bishop. It is not in any way superior to the order of Elder, except so far as the office brings honor and increased responsibility. Mr. Wesley considered himself possessed of all the prerogatives of a Scriptural Bishop, or in other words, that so far as the virtue of the office is concerned, he and all Elders, or Presbyters, were possessed of the parts of Bishops, according to the New Testament. In this he shows that notwithstanding his early training he considered the ministry as in the hands of two orders. While the arrangement of the third was simply human, to secure harmony and correct guidance and good government in all the important interests relating to the propagation of the Gospel. In this sense only have we Bishops. Although Methodism had been well established in the American colonies for many years, it still remained under the control of Mr. Wesley and his delegated assistants. But in the year 1784, in the city of Baltimore, under the Presidency of the great and good Thomas Coke, LL.D., was organized the M. E. Church proper, and the first General Conference held.

In accordance with a document sent out by Mr. Wesley, and then in the possession of Dr. Coke, it was agreed, says Mr. Asbury, "to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, and to have Superintendents, Elders and Deacons." Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury were ac-

cordingly set apart as General Superintendents, and subsequently styled Bishops.

Thus was inaugurated the grandest movement of the century. The Church then laid plans and devised a stupendous work, confronting all difficulties, such as only men of God could prosecute. Gigantic as were the colossal aims of that first General Conference, the end already accomplished far transcends their most sanguine expectations. The immense structure, whose foundations were erected in England, more than a century ago, has reached out its arms to the uttermost parts of the earth; and is to-day, in every land, a true monument of praise unto our God. Little did the weary band of care-worn yet hopeful veterans, who assembled in Baltimore, December 24th, 1784, know that the grain of mustard seed would so soon become a mighty tree, under whose peaceful shades would gather, in less than a hundred years, millions of the human race. Another evidence that God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts, and under his care the desert may rejoice and blossom as the rose, ere yet the morning of time has passed away. To Him be all the praise fo ever.

Methodism has been divided into several distinct denominations. The causes of these divisions we need not, at present notice. Suffice it to say, that with the exception of the Welsh Calvanistic body, they all hold in common the same doctrines, and are only divided on questions of minor importance, such as polity, form of government, orders, &c., &c., things external to the principles of doctrine and salvation. The total membership is at present more than four millions, with a general following, in all the branches, of not less than twenty millions, including the children who are under the care of the Church. The inquiry may here arise, What is the secret of such success? Is it in the doctrines of the Church? No new fangled theories have been advanced—no freshly coined imagery of truth to lead her forward, and yet in the doctrines taught, we find the power by which the people have been gained and the cause firmly established. This, therefore, leads to a brief consideration of

II. METHODISM—DOCTRINAL.

It builds upon the sentiment of the poet of our own church, who wrote,

"Jesus, the name high over all,
In hell, or earth, or sky,
Angels and men before it fall,
And devils fear and fly."

"Jesus, the name to sinners dear,
The name to sinners given,
It scatters all their guilty fear,
It turns their hell to heaven."

We recognize Christ as the chief corner-stone of all Christian work. Upon him we rest for salvation in this life, and glorification after death. He is our all and in all. We accept the doctrines of man's depravity—the trinity in unity—personality and Godhead of the Holy Ghost—the divinity of Christ—an atonement for all mankind—repentance—justification by faith—regeneration—adoption—the witness of the Spirit—sanctification, and all other orthodox doctrines of an evangelical faith, as held even by the apostles themselves.

As an example of our doctrinal belief in its relation to man's salvation and happiness, the following brief homily is given on the familiar text found in 2 Corinthians, v : 17 :

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature—old things are passed away—behold all things are become new."—PAUL.

This text is selected as likely to illustrate that mode of expository treatment of the principles of man's salvation, which won for Methodism its earliest victories.

How may one be in Christ, and when? are the questions to engage our attention. "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," are the only terms and conditions of salvation. These we shall examine carefully, though with brevity, as we have only time to glance at the several thoughts this outline must present. As the foundation of repentance, or perhaps a prerequisite to repentance, there is first of all the enlightenment of the mind by the Word and Spirit of God. One must feel that the

great truths of the Gospel *are truths* divinely given for the salvation of man, and that they justly describe our state by nature, and reveal to us the only Savior who is able to satisfy our need. Then follows what is generally designated "conviction," but we prefer another term, and say "the state of being convinced," for whether we accept Christ as our savior, or otherwise, we are all "spiritual convicts," or convicted by the law of grace and the teaching of the Gospel. In the state of being convinced we feel our undone condition, our need of mercy and pardon, and that we have sinned against Almighty God. The goodness, love, justice and long-suffering of our Heavenly Father fill our thoughts and rise in condemnation against us. This leads to "contrition," or sorrow of heart, for having offended our Infinite Benefactor and Friend. We feel that we are guilty before God, and we are pained thereby. The soul breaks out in strong desire and exclaims

> "Depth of mercy can there be,
> Mercy still reserved for me."

The penitent one then resolves that he will sin no more; "that he will arise and go to his Father, from whom he is estranged, and ask for reconciliation. Next and finally in repentance of a scriptural character, there is action, or the carrying into execution the previous determination. The enquirer comes to the mercy seat that he may seek Jesus. Here his faith is to rise higher, taking personal hold on Christ and accepting him fully as his Savior. Of course there has been faith in every step thus far—what we may call collateral faith—for if the sinner comes to Christ for salvation, the very fact of his coming is evidence not only that he has the power to believe, but that he does believe to some extent. Repentance proves the existence of faith, and in our journey from enlightenment as a sinner, to eternal glory in heaven, we are accompanied by faith in God through our Lord Jesus Christ every inch of the way.

The penitent inquirer, convinced, contrite, weary and determined, now asks, "What must I do to be saved," or like one of old exclaims, "God be merciful

to me a sinner." But need he sorrow long? Will the Heavenly Dove of Peace tarry in his flight? Nay. Jesus is looking for this penitent one, and the penitent is looking for Jesus. They may soon meet and join in a perpetual covenant. Listen: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest;" or, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father;" and "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;" Jesus is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He is our atoning sacrifice. When the repenting soul has found its way under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to the mercy seat, it reaches the crisis of its journey. Now is the supreme moment of venturing all in one grand launching out by faith in the atonement. The mind has bowed intellectual assent to the principles of the Gospel from the beginning, but to save the soul requires more. It must be the consent and embracing of Christ and salvation, not only with the intellect, but also with the whole heart. Our yearning of soul, earnest and intense affection of heart must bear their testimony, and cry out, "My Lord and my God." "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

We accept Christ as our Savior, believing not only that he "died for all," and perchance will save us, but that he does not save us now. When? The very instant we believe it. He is our personal Savior now. We by faith reach out our hand and grasp him as our only hope, and in that moment we are his—called to be disciples. It is almost impossible for us to make the plan of salvation appear as simple as it really is; words only serve to make clouds. It is so easy for us to imagine, but so difficult to describe. Take a ship at sea; the storm comes, the vessel is stranded on a sunken rock; it is a wreck. The people have to shift for themselves; every other hope is dying. See the poor traveler in the water! He struggles for life; is scarcely able to swim. A passing plank floats near him; he has only to reach out his hand and rest on the plank. He does not wait to reason; he asks no questions. He simply clings to the plank and is saved.

So it is in salvation. Jesus is our hope, our plank. We are sinking in life's troubled sea. He comes near us; says, "Fear not, it is I; trust me; take my hand, I will bear you up and take you to a place of safety." We believe him, accept him, follow him, obey his instructions, practice his precepts and know that he is our Rock, the Rock of our salvation, "higher than we," and eternal. This is justifying faith by which we are pardoned or absolved. It is not literal justification. We could not be legally or literally justified unless our innocence were first established, or just cause proven. It is relative justification, that is justification or pardon for Christ's sake. We have sinned against God, and deserve punishment. Jesus has died in our "room and stead." His offering has vicarious merit. God is love. The law, in its majesty, is satisfied, and because of the efficacy of our Redeemer's work, "God can be just and yet the justifier of every one that believeth;" hence we are justified relatively, or for Jesus' sake; and now the exhortation is, "Go in peace and sin no more," or, in paraphrase, the past is forgiven and forgotten; henceforth lead a new life, a life of faith in the Son of God. At this moment, to use a pretty metaphor, a new name is given to us, and that new name of Divine import is registered on the heavenly roll, so that our citizenship is now in Heaven, and we are entitled to all the emoluments of heavenly blessing.

At this same period of our experience we are subject to a change of heart, called regeneration. While it seems to succeed justification in the order of its bestowment, it really accompanies the former; they occur about the same time. If there were no change within our heart and being, merely pardoning or absolving us would only save us for a moment, we would enter into sin again. You may take the illustration of a watch, the mechanism of which is deranged. You point the indicators or correct the time every hour, but all to no purpose. "The watch will not go." So with us without regeneration; something is wrong with our spiritual mechanism. As you take the watch to the watchmaker to have it repaired or cleaned, so

we take our hearts and minds to Christ, the Great Master-Workman, and he sends to our aid the Holy Spirit, who changes our condition within as Christ has changed our relationship without. He changes our desires, motives, purposes, thoughts, lifts them into a purer channel, directs them heavenward, gives us grace to abstain from evil, breaks the dominion of sin, plants us in Jesus Christ, and promises help in every moment of emergency. Thus we are "born from above." Christ has put our names on the roll of the saved, and the Holy Spirit gives his influence in our heart and life to keep us there and prevent subsequent estrangement from God. We are now free from condemnation, and henceforward must walk, not according to the flesh (or sin), but according to the spirit (of purity) of our new life.

Here the inquirer asks, "how shall we know that this great work is done? What testimony will God give us?" "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Whoso believeth "hath the witness in himself." How may we know that we are saved? is an all-important question. Let us answer it briefly and simply. You will know five things. First, that you have been led by the Divine Spirit. No evil spirit would help us to improve ourselves. Secondly, you know that you have turned away from sin. If we make a change of anything in our life or in our position, or even in our room or posture, we know it, and when we cease to take sin as our chief good and turn around to God, we know that we have done so. Thirdly, you know whether honestly, fully and cordially you are trusting Christ as your Savior, with a loving heart and a believing mind. Your own spirit must hear the case and decide the issue. Your own spirit, (that is, your own consciousness), says to you now, you are leaning on the arm of Jesus. Fourthly, you "love the brethren." The Church of Christ appears to you in a different light; you are willing to cast in your lot with the people of God, and whenever these simple marks and this love are found,

that soul is indeed converted and saved. Finally: there is the witness of the Spirit of God. What is this? you ask. It is hard to portray or define this strange testimony, yet we heartily accept it. When the soul is resting in Jesus, saved, there comes to our consciousness or spirit a sweet messenger from above. He whispers "peace, be still," and there is a "great calm." He has been leading us all the time to the haven of safety, and now he simply tells us through the medium of our own intelligence that we are there. No tongue or pen can tell the strange mystery of his office. Some are joyous and filled with ecstacy and demonstrative gladness when the blessing of rest and peace is infused into the soul by the Divine Spirit; others are quiet, calm, tranquil, serene as the smoothing of the river after a mighty storm. Take this simple illustration: We go into the telegraph office, hand a message to the operator, and in a moment it is carried by the "controlled lightning" to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. So it seems to us that between the soul of man and the throne of the Infinite there is an electric wire of spiritual communication; and when we come to our Savior and give our life into his hands to keep for weal or woe, for life or death, the Recording Angel touches the wire attached to the mercy seat or throne, and in some way we feel that we are accepted in Christ, and now in him, have "become new creatures." Now he sings as he feels "Christ within, the hope of glory:"

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear,
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba, Father cry."

Prior to his repentance he was a wanderer from his Father's house, alienated and estranged, having no claim upon his goodness, mercy or inheritance. Now all this is changed; he is reconciled to his Father, he is taken out of the family of the evil one, away from the encampment and service of satan, and now established as a resident member of the "Household of faith." He becomes a dutiful and obedient son, ac-

knowledging and keeping the commandments of God, walking in wisdom's ways and receiving from the kind hand of his loving Parent all that may be requisite or best for his happiness and spiritual culture. The promises are his, the provisions of grace are his, the special providence of God is his for his protection and support. Hereafter and forever he is to "fear God (with loving, filial fear) and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Not only is it a duty, but privilege, favor and glorious coronation.

He is now justified, regenerated, adopted into the fold and flock of the Good Shepherd, and all this has upon it the seal of the Holy Spirit. "Forward" is now his watchword, until every part of his being is permeated by the leaven of righteousness. He is to go from "strength to strength" and from "love to love" and from "conquering to conquer." The law of growth and progress is plainly indicated; it remains for him to follow that law, continually urging his way upward and onward, perfecting his conduct and entire life into conforming with the Divine Model, and depending on the Holy Spirit's help and presence. He is to go on to perfection. This work may be, by successive stages, hindered or hastened in proportion to application and fidelity. There is not one law for the mind and another for the spirit; that is, there is not a law of instantaneous education and conformation for soul life and another of gradual development and completeness for mental life. There is direct analogy in every department of nature and being. None of the laws of life, in any form, must contradict others of equal importance; hence the assertion repeated, we must go from one altitude to another in the enjoyment of grace, using every means we can command so that we may the more speedily reach our destination, and feel and know that we are entirely sanctified or cleansed from all sin. It will take time and care, with many an earnest struggle, to overcome self in every department; to bow our will always to the will of our Creator; to gain the victory over everything impure, worldly and offensive, passion, temper, life, conversation—all must be under

strict government and continuous control. Sometimes our besetments may defeat us, but if one stumble or fall, that is no reason why he should stumble always, or refuse to rise again. These only warn us of the danger in the way and show us the more our need of greater trust in Christ and less in ourselves. If we keep "looking unto Jesus," we are sure to win the race. "He will never leave us nor forsake us." Step after step he will help us to take until the top stone is placed on the beautiful building of grace, amid shouts of praise and rejoicing. While the way to our expected goal is becoming shorter, every triumph we achieve, and the grand end of our striving, Christian perfection is drawing near, yet we have much joy and peace all the way. We are not deprived of any of the real pleasures of life; everything good, noble and elevating belong to the Christian, so that even in his warfare he is reaping a rich reward. By his devotion, consecration and continued watchfulness, he may have his "hope fulfilled" early, but if he stand still or retrograde, it will be "hope deferred," if not finally extinguished. We copy the following from Dr. Pope's Theology, volume third, recently placed in the disciplinary course of study for all ministerial candidates of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It is well worthy of careful consideration, as coming from one who is justly acknowledged in the light of a standard teacher and author. Dr. Pope is one of the ex-Presidents of the British Conference, Weslyan Methodist Church, and in 1875, fraternal Delegate from England to our General Conference:

"In his administration of sanctifying grace, the Holy Spirit proceeds by degrees. Terms of progress are applied to each department of that work in the saint; or, in other words, the goal of entire sanctification is represented as the end of a process in which the spirit requires the co-operation of the believer. This co-operation, however, is only the condition on which is suspended what is the work of divine grace alone. The negative side of sanctification, as the removal of sin, is described as a process, and in a variety of ways. The most familiar is that which repre-

sents the sinning nature as under the doom of death. 'Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve him.' Crucifixion is a grand mental process, disqualifying the body from serving any master, as such certainly tending to death. So in the parallel to the Galatians, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lust,' and elsewhere they are said to 'put off the old man and put on the new man.' Moreover in the last passage the Apostle bids us 'mortify therefore your members' by killing or weakening down to extinction every individual tendency or disposition to evil. Not only is the old man to be destroyed by the doom of crucifixion, but every specific member of his sin is to be surrendered to atrophy .....Crucifixion is of the whole body, mortification is of each member. Now, while all these passages refer to the earnest, self-discipline of the believer entering into the design of redemption, they represent only the submission of faith, which brings into the soul the virtue of life-giving and death-giving spirit.....From this we may deduce two principles: First, the general bias or character of the soul becomes positively more and more alienated from sin and set upon good, and proportionally the susceptibility to temptation, or the affinity with sin becomes negatively less and less evident in its consciousness. There is in the healthy progress of the Christian a constant confirmation of the will in its ultimate choice, and a constant increase of its power to do what it wills. The vanishing point of perfection in the will is to be entirely merged in the will of God. There is also a perpetual weakening of the susceptibility to temptation. What was at first a hard contest, gradually advances to the sublime triumph of the savior, 'Get thee hence, Satan.' Every active and passive grace steadily advances, and sin fades out of the nature. Every habit of evil is unwound from the life, until at length the Christian can say, like his Master, 'The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me.' This gradual and sure depression of the sinful principle down to its zero or limit of non-

entity, is progressive sanctification. .....The positive side, that of consecration by the spirit of love, is also a process; a gradual process..... ...Hence the shedding abroad of the love of God by the Holy Ghost admits of increase. It is enough to cite the Apostle's prayer 'that your love may abound yet more and more' .....St. Paul says, 'The love of Christ constraineth us,' meaning that love in us which constraineth Christ himself. 'How am I straitened till it be accomplished.' This term points to a gradual deepening pressure, and as in the Lord himself, so in his servants, the power of love drives every impediment before it .....It gradually, surely and effectually, gathers itself within closer and closer bonds until its force becomes irresistible. And of that same love the Ephesian prayer asks, 'That ye be rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.' Holiness as an estate is also described as progressive; first, as a goal to be attained; secondly, to be attained through human effort, but lastly, only as the bestowment of the Holy Ghost, the Supreme Agent of all good. Once we have the expression, 'perfecting holiness,' where the word indicates an end to which effort is ever converging, whether that end be fully attained or not; in any case it is a progress. Again, St. Paul prays 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly,' where the gradual perfecting of body, soul and spirit is obviously referred to. Again, a still higher prayer, 'Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth;' truth, however, which the Lord always speaks of as gradually imparted. 'He will guide you into all truth.'.....The sanctification administered, effected, imparted as the free gift of the Holy Ghost is also conditional on the effort of man.....The process of sanctification keeps pace with the fulfillment of certain conditions. St. James says, 'Cleanse year hands and purify your hearts.'.....Such passages would not be found, were it not the intention of the Spirit to impress on us a high estimate of our own responsibility. Nothing is more constantly declared than that

the effusion of the Spirit of consecration keeps pace with the co-operation of the believer ..... As to the state of holiness, it is a goal to the attainment of which Christian men are habitually required to bend their effort. It is the object of their own aspiration; ..... It is the secret and strength of the command 'perfecting holiness.' As to righteousness, 'That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,' in whom 'love is the fulfilling of the law.' The word fulfilled here must have its full force; it refers to the gradual accomplishment of a design ..... The divine grace in our lives gradually and surely works out the requirements of the new evangelical law interpreted by grace. There is a consummation of the Christian experience, which may be said to introduce perfection, when the spirit cries 'it is finished,' in the believer. The moment when sin expires, known only to God, is the divine victory over sin in the soul; this is the office of the Spirit alone. The moment when love becomes supreme in its ascendency, a moment known only to God, is the Spirit's triumph in the soul's consecration; this also is entirely his work. And whenever that maturity of Christian experience and life is reached, which the apostle prays for so often, it is solely through the operation of the same Spirit. It is 'being filled with *all the* fullness of God,' and that through being 'strengthened into might by his Spirit in the inner man.' While, therefore the tenor of the New Testament represents entire sanctification as the result of a process, it is also ascribed to the result of a constant effusion of the Holy Ghost crowned in our last and consummating act of his power.....But lastly, it must be remembered that this final and decisive act of the Spirit is the real act set upon a previous and continuous work. The processes may be hastened and condensed into a short space; they must be passed through as processes. 'Yea, we establish the law,' was the apostles vindication of the doctrine of 'faith, counted for righteousness,' and the same vindication is necessary for sanctification.....Never do we read of a higher life, that is, other than the intensification of the lower.

.....Whenever the seal of perfection is set on the work, whether in death or in life, it must be a critical and instantaneous act, possibly known to God alone, or if revealed in the trembling consciousness of the believer, a secret that he knows not how to utter. But this leads us from the sanctuary to the most Holy Place."

The preparations for an entire consecration to God may be long continued, or they may be hastened. (Let us therefore work out our salvation with fear and trembling, trusting in the Lord for guidance and power. Let us remember that he helpeth our infirmities and maketh intercession for us.)

This is given as a plain statement of the plan of salvation.

We have two sacraments, namely: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The meaning we attach to these there is not time now to elaborate. We preach Jesus and the resurrection. Heaven for the pure and exclusion therefrom for the impenitent. These are the doctrines which best suit humanity everywhere, and attending the preaching of which the Word has come in the demonstration of power and with the unction of the Holy One. The human heart responds to these truths and exclaims, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth."

III. METHODISM—PRACTICAL.

That it is so is seen in its adaptation to the necessities and emergencies of all classes and conditions of the people. It calls for devotion on the part of its subjects, and holy living from its adherents. Its machinery, so to speak, accommodates every grade of humanity, and this without any violation of any moral precept or compromising of the highest forms of rectitude. If you desire to notice proofs of its practicability, follow closely the movements of the men who were the instruments of its introduction.

When Mr. Wesley began his work, in what condition did he find the State Church? Many of the clergy were gamblers, drunkards and sportsmen. Not a few

of them were arian in belief, and quite a number openly avowed infidelity. True, many of the clergy were pure, even in that corrupt age, and faithful in preaching sound doctrines; but these were caused to endure much persecution for the Bible's sake; and even their brethren mocked their devotion and made laughter of their fidelity to the thirty-nine articles of religion. Many of the clergy, supported by State funds, did not accept those "articles," and spoke of them in terms of blasphemy. Mr. Wesley was literally raised up and thrust out to reform and purify the State Church, and introduce the elements of a second Protestant revolution. He and his co-laborers were chosen to take from the eyes of the English people the scales of superstition and sin and as they went about preaching as did the apostle, "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." God eminently blessed their labors and gave his seal of approbation. Theoretical, experimental and practical religion, instead of dead forms, were loudly proclaimed through all the land, and the people listened, meditated and believed. It was then discovered that Methodism was the very system needed to rescusitate the lifeless institutions of the National Church; and thanks be unto God, its work was not confined to that day, or to that condition of society; it is equally qualified to sustain and lead forward a living host of witnesses in this purer era. The work is not yet all done. Methodism is not ready for burial. It is not worn out or obsolete. It is one of the "eternal forces," by which God proposes to subjugate the powers of darkness, and bring forth light unto the conclusion of all prophecy, and the consummation of all things. While the world lasts, Christianity must be practical and Methodism will succeed only as the same rule is steadily followed. We want earnest living men and women, who will stoop down to suffering humanity, and manifest the spirit of the Good Samaritan, stop with a word of comfort, a look of love, a helping hand. The world needs more sympathy, and he is not a man, but only a walking machine, who can avert his gaze when starvation and woe confront his eye and attention and call for relief speedily.

IV. METHODISM—AGGRESSIVE.

Aggressiveness has always been one of Methodism's leading characteristics. It has taken long and rapid strides among the nations of the earth; and yet it scorns to grow strong from the ranks of others, or to place a barrier in the way of any other church where evangelical truth is held. It is painful indeed to watch the efforts of some denominations of only passing importance, who do their mission in a very unchristian manner. Their chief aim seems to be not so much to save the souls of men as to garner them from other parts of the "household of faith." They seem to glory in trying to overthrow other churches. Such conduct is unchristian and degrading. We do not wish that Methodism should reap fruit with so much shame, but prefer "to go to them that sell and buy for ourselves." Anything resembling petty robbery, in the name of Christ, is an insult to his cause, and dishonoring his kingdom. What kind of aggression do we ask then for Methodism? A steady march against the world, the flesh and the devil,—entering every stronghold of satan, and demanding unconditional surrender, in the name of the adorable Trinity. Going where we are needed—going where we are needed most. We have not time to cross swords with those who are on the Lord's side equally with ourselves. Ours a nobler end, a purer purpose. Our work is more like heaven. We should attack the foe of our race, carry away his subjects and forever make them prisoners of hope and citizens of the Kingdom of Grace, until everywhere the knowledge of God covers the earth as the waters cover the sea. Then, and not till then, is our work done, and our discharge asked. The aggressive feature of Methodism has exposed it to many persecutions, but like the gigantic oak, towering toward the sky, these storms have only made it plant its roots more firmly in the soil, and given it greater power of endurance.

V. METHODISM—SUGGESTIVE.

The most important suggestions are briefly, five in

number: First, If God be for us who can be against us? And that we have his presence is as sure, as Providence divine can indicate. Be not faithless but believing—the Lord our God will go before us.

Secondly, the influence and power of one man when clothed with the panoply of truth, courage and love. Wesley, Knox, Luther, Melancthon and others of God's noblemen.

Thirdly, that the first preparation for the Gospel ministry is the presence and power of spiritual endowment. Give us educated ministers is the call. We say "Amen" to it; but let them also be filled with the Spirit. Culture and refinement are good and in demand more and more, but the great essential of the days of the apostles must not be lost sight of "tarry ye at Jerusalem," &c.

Fourthly, the greater usefulness of a Church free from State control. Make Methodism a State Church in the United States, and immediately you sharpen the shears to take away the glory and strength of the system.

Fifthly, great possibilities await us in the future. As a Church, what may we not do, if we are faithful to our history and careful of our record? When the topstone is brought forth to be placed upon the finished and glorified spiritual structure, with shouts of rejoicing and grace among those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, will be the millions of our Israel to ask, as in the centuries of long ago, "What hath God wrought?"

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. S. E. Jones, now stationed at Oakland, Maryland, is a young man of great promise to the Church. For a time, he fought against the Divine call to the ministry, but finally yielding, he found a ready field for his gifts and graces in the itinerancy, amid the mountains of West Virginia. The nine years thus far spent in the West Virginia Conference, have been successful ones; and his friends look for even greater success in the future. Brother Jones is a student; is well read in theology; is a good speaker; always thoroughly studies his subjects, and delivers his sermons with earnestness and power. He ranks among the very best preachers in the Conference.

I give below a brief narrative of his life, in his own language, as detailed to me in conversations on the subject. He says: "I was born in Herefordshire, England, March 22d, 1846—the ninth of a family of ten children. My early education was obtained in the public schools, in boyhood, and continued while teaching, after sixteen years of age. My parents were members of the Church of England, in which communion I received early religious influences. It was the only Church I attended regularly in England, except Mr. Spurgeon's, during a three years' residence in London.

"After the death of both parents, I married Miss Elleanor J. Griffiths, in June 1870, and embarked for America the following week. My first intention was to go to Colorado, but my wife's sickness detained me in New York city. As she did not seem likely to get strong for some time, I settled in that city, and engaged in whatever employment I could find. My wife had been a member of the Wesleyan Church in England. I had never made a profession of religion, and when I came out to America, and for many years previous, had paid little attention to religion. except to doubt it. Afflictions arising out of my wife's illness, led me to God. We had made the acquaintance of a Mr. Carpenter, a class-leader of Lexington Avenue M. E. Church, who invited us to go to class meeting and church. Our preferences led us to go, and on my first attendance at class meeting, after speaking of my intention of leading a religious life, I felt for the first time the happy experience of a child of God. This was in the first week of November 1872.

" Brother Carpenter often urged me to preach, but I resisted, on account of my incompetency, and the condition of my wife's

health being such that I could not prepare myself. (I had joined the Lexington Avenue M. E. Church under the pastorate of F. S. De Hass, D.D., in November 1872). I taught in the Sabbath School, and did what I could, but though I felt that I might preach, I could not see the way open. On the following July my wife died. I felt then that the way was opened, and, under the advice of my pastor, Dr. De Hass, came out to West Virginia with a letter of introduction from him to Brother Ison, who was then Presiding Elder of the Parkersburg District. This was in October 1873. Brother Ison took me with him to his Quarterly Meeting on Harrisville Circuit, of which Brother M. McNeel had charge. During the protracted meeting that followed, I preached my first sermon—before I was even licensed to preach. While waiting for Conference to meet in the spring, I taught school at Smithton, in Doddridge county. I was licensed to preach on the Smithton Circuit by Brother A. Hall, about the close of 1873.

I joined the Conference at Fairmont in the spring of 1874, and was appointed to Mannington Circuit, with Brother R. M. Wallace as colleague. The next year I was appointed to Bridgeport Circuit, and the following year to Rowlesburg Station. Next I was sent to Fetterman Station for the short year of 1877. In August of that year I married Miss Belle Anderson, daughter of the late W. Anderson, Esq., of Monongalia county; and at the Conference following, I was appointed to Weston Station, where I remained three years. Then I was appointed to Oakland Station, where I now reside, and where I am, in my humble way, trying to do my Master's work."

SERMON XX.

BY

REV. SAMUEL E. JONES.

THEME:—PRAYER.

TEXT:—"After this manner, therefore, pray ye, 'Our Father, which art in Heaven.'"—Matthew vi: 9.

The subject of prayer is full of interest to the thoughtful and religious mind. To the philosophic inquirer, it is interesting from its beginning on questions of Providence and natural law. To the Christian believer it is important because of its vital relation to the religious life. To him who regards it as an essential means of development of spirituality and godly character, few questions are more important than those that relate to the spirit and manner of true prayer.

In all its history, the human race has demonstrated its inability, unaided, to reach a true idea and practice of prayer. While its prevalence points to the fact that there is in man the instinct of worship, the universal human error, on the subject, indicates that the way to God has been lost. Not to speak of the extravagances and absurdities of heathen worship, we find that even among those who have and accept Divine revelation, the proper spirit and power of prayer are frequently wanting. Among the Jews Jesus found that formalism had banished devotion, and a mechanical elaborateness had left no place for spiritual exercise.

Instead of being an humble, trusting communion with God, it was, under Pharisaic instruction, made an instrument of self conceit and pride. Nor has the Christian Church been free from the errors into which the Jews fell. The tendency is to develop formalism and destroy spirituality—to lose the power in the elaboration of methods. This is not applicable to those only who are professedly ritualistic. There may be formal irregularity and spontaneous unspirituality. There is often as much formalism in private devotions as in public services. The truth is, that we can avoid formalism, not by any rules of ours, or the want of them, but by adopting the prayer of the disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray," and then by earnest attention to what he has taught us on the subject.

The Bible would be inadequate to supply our spiritual needs if it did not thoroughly inform us on this matter. We find it is full of prayer. The life and teachings of Christ are especially rich in instruction on this subject. With him prayer was a constant exercise. His whole life was permeated with it. He who, if any, seemed least in need of prayer, was conspicuous for prayerfulness.

The most valuable instruction Christ has given to the world on this subject is what is known as the "Lord's Prayer," the first words of which are contained in the text that is the basis of this discourse. There can be no dispute regarding the use we should make of this divinely appointed form of worship. Its purpose is to supply us with a true idea of the spirit and manner of acceptable prayer. Its perfection as a model, involves its excellence as a form for use as it is. Hence it is both to be used and to be studied. But it is particularly to be studied. The tendency in worship is towards incantation—the practice of rites and the repetition of forms, as though there were some value in them. The principle of this, so rediculous in the heathen, is not always absent from so-called Christian worship. Care must be taken to avoid the idea that because one has said the "Lord's Prayer" he has really prayed. There may be prayerless repeating of this perfect prayer. Above

all things, Christ would have us understand this model that its simplicity, directness, and what is of first importance, its spirit may characterize all our communion with God. He has given it to us that it may inspire and guide us to successful and satisfying fellowship with him upon whom we must depend. In this, as in all revelation, "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," may he who has given us this prayer for our instruction and guidance, help us to understand the meaning and power of the first words, "Our Father, which art in Heaven."

This opening thought is the key to all that follows and to the truth of genuine prayer. From its simplicity and familiarity its force is not always felt. Yet, when we master it and make it our own, the mountain-top of divine communion is reached, with all the mists of superstition, fear and unbelief far below.

Jesus gives us in these words the conception of God we ought to have in prayer. It is seldom, perhaps, that persons stop to ask themselves, What is God to me? What is my conception of his relations to my life and being? Yet no questions are more important. Our working idea of God is the basis of our moral and religious life. Not the creed to which we may subscribe, that does not always represent what is believed, but the idea that is a practical power to us. Now, God may be regarded from different stand-points, and in fact is so regarded, from which arises the variety that prevails in philosophical and religious systems. Some think only of the mystery of his nature, and call him the Absolute, the Great Unknown, and other high-sounding, but empty names. This conception of God is misty, vague, worthless. Others regard him only as manifested in matter—a force showing itself in many forms—and their thought is pantheistic. Or, he may be viewed as a Creator only—a necessary element in a system of thought, to fill up a chasm in the plan of a philosopher. Some exalt certain attributes to the depreciation of others. To one, divine sovereignity obscures all the rest, to another divine love shuts out of sight all other attributes. The result is, a conception of God that is more or less er-

roneous, and a corresponding effect in life and character. And so the first lesson the Master gives us in prayer is a right conception of him to whom we go, and of our relation to him. When ye pray, say: "Our Father." Not that we are to think less of his infinite nature and attributes. But in addition to the facts that he is Almighty, Eternal, All-knowing, and fills the universe, we are to remember for our comfort and assurance that:

"All this God is all for us,
A Father all our own."

We feel at once that this is just what we need. God is brought very close to us. Communion and fellowship have a meaning they cannot otherwise have. St. John says, "Our fellowship is with the father." Fellowship! Who can fathom the deep significance of the word when joined with the idea of Divine Fatherhood? Not only is the personality of God made vivid, but we feel that we are linked to him in bonds of nature and of life. For we need not regard the Fatherhood of God as a mere name, used as an accommodation to human intelligence. Though reason may stumble at the thought, faith joyfully accepts the mighty truth, that we are partakers of the divine nature. There is, perhaps, much undeveloped significance in the fact that when, for the welfare of humanity, it was necessary, it was not repugnant to the divine nature to become man. We stand in dumb amazement before the fact that the Word, which was God, became flesh—that he who was the brightness of the glory of God and the express image of his person, took upon him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. Some light may be shed on the mystery from the primitive revelation, that God, at the first, made man in his own image. Human nature is now abnormal and sinful, but we must not forget that, though now a wreck, it was once as noble a vessel as ever God sent out on the sea of existence. We look backward as well as forward for the dignity and glory of manhood. And fallen as it is, there is something in it that could move the divine nature so that it is written, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten

Son.' The thought of God as a father, kindles the noblest hopes and aspirations in the human breast, and stirs the soul with all the "power of an endless life." God is never so Great to us—he never so fills and thrills us as when we think of him as really "Our Father." This conception of God, while it is the fullest and most satisfying, is also the simplest. The infant mind can grasp it. To the ignorant there is no difficulty in comprehending it. To the fearful and doubting it is attractive and assuring. Whatever their other conceptions of God, all mankind may meet on this common ground of thought and relation and in prayer say "Our Father."

As the true conception of God in prayer is as a Father, so the true spirit of prayer is the filial spirit. To the fatherly heart nothing is so acceptable as a childlike spirit. When God seeks men to come to him, though he is a king, yet he is not seeking subjects; though he is a creator, he is not seeking his creatures merely, but he is a father seeking his children. Jesus rebukes the unworthy thought that prayer is merely a method of getting what we want. God knows what we want before we ask him. Prayer is the loving intercourse of a child with his Heavenly Father. We have not learned the full value of it, if only a sense of want or the pressure of duty sends us to our knees before God. How would our earthly parents think of us, if we never sought their presence except because we wanted something from them, or in the cold, formal performance of an obligation. It is as children they want us to come. And so it seems that Jesus teaches here that the suppliant is welcome as a child. To supply our need is not the chief reason why God wants us to come to him. He will be to us more than we need—our Preserver, Guide, Comforter, Savior—infinite attributes shall minister to us, and he himself will serve us—but he desires from us, not so much petitions, as the loving rocognition of him as "Our Father in Heaven." "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us," not that he blesses us and supplies our wants, but "that we should be called the sons of God." This is the richest, best

thing infinite love could give us. All blessing is contained in that fellowship with God which finds its expression in the word "Father."

Jesus has taught us to go to God in the way he himself went, for he desires that the glory and strength of his human life may be shared by us. The filial spirit permeates his devotions. The word "Father," is again and again upon his lips, and seldom is any other name used. In the agony of Gethsemane, and in the bitterness of the Cross, as well as in more peaceful seasons, he uses the same tender word. Only once do we find him omitting it altogether. On the Cross, when the agonies of more than death were upon him, when the Father's face was for a little time hidden, at that hour the like to which was never known before, nor can ever come again, he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But soon the clouds dispersed, and the dear familiar word "Father" is heard again as he commends his soul to His keeping. And so he has taught us to follow him in communion with God here, that we may ripen for that life beyond, where it shall be forever perfected.

Faith in God necessarily accompanies the idea of his Fatherhood. It is natural for a child to trust a father. If doubts arise they come from the idea of imperfections in the person and not in the relation. But God is perfect, and if we regard him as a Father, we believe that he will be to us all that is implied in that relation. Jesus develops this idea when he says; "If ye being evil (imperfect and limited in power and purpose) know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him." The difficulties of faith arise from being at too great a distance from God. Jesus places us close to him in prayer that we may trust him with all the simplicity and unrestrained confidence of a child. To leave all in his hands, to take from him whatever he sends, to do his will without question, is the trust we are taught in the words of our text. All the infinite perfections of his nature, instead of dazzling and repelling us by their glory, unite in attracting us and inviting the fullest confi-

dence, when accompanied by the idea that he is our Father. If with Christ we can say "Father," it will be natural to say "Thy will be done." Resignation is not an easy thing. It is more common, perhaps, to feel that we ought to be resigned than to feel that we are. To call that good that seems only evil, to believe that the barb that pierces the heart is pressed by a friendly hand, is a triumph not lightly won. It is only when persons are very near and dear to us that we can believe that their seeming cruelty is really kindness. And so it seems to me, that God expects cheerful resignation in the bitter experiences of life from his children only. The recognition of Divine sovereignty may produce hopeless non-resistance, or perplexed helplessness—an acquiescence that is born of despair. The faith and resignation Jesus has taught are such as a child freely and naturally has. There is no strain in submitting all to our perfect Father. It is not a violent wrench and distortion of the soul to bring it into harmony with an inscrutable Providence, but confidence in one who is bound to us and our interests by the closest ties. It is grasping the Divine hand tighter in the darkness—nestling closer to God in the storm.

Jesus teaches us in the text, what is the comprehensiveness of prayer. The care of a father is as wide as the necessities of the child. In filial communings we may tell him all that concerns us. This is a blessed thought and a valuable one if we use it. We need sympathy—some loving friend to whom we may tell all our trials and cares. We often seek some friendly human bosom and try to unburden ourselves. But human friends are not always near, not always sympathetic. Besides each one has his own trials and is not always ready to help us to bear ours.

> "Go, bury thy sorrow,
> The world has its share."

But where shall we take it if not to our Father in heaven. His ear is not weary nor his heart too full to receive us. Oh, if we would learn the full meaning of Divine sympathy for us and with us, and lay our

whole life before God in daily prayer we would realize that

"The heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

Then instead of burdening the world with our complaints:

"Our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord."

The revelation of Divine Fatherhood, as the basis of communion with God, shows the real meaning and power of prayer. Why does God regard what we say to him and how does he answer are questions that perplex many minds, and prove stumbling blocks in the way to the mercy seat. The answer to these inquiries is not supplied by human reason. Jesus lets the light in on the whole subject when he says, "When ye pray, say 'Our Father.'" If man is but a factor in nature—a part of the great whole of the universe, and of no greater importance than any of the others—if he is but the result of natural law, and of no greater dignity than any other organized or unorganized body, then, indeed, there is no prayer and its philosophy is the philosophy of a delusion. If man is not closer to God than a sheep, then there is no reason that man should pray and the sheep not. From any plane lower than that on which man is placed, in the teaching of Christ, it may be that prayer is impossible. But if man is God's child, then prayer is not only possible but necessary. Shall not the child commune with the parent? The working out of parental love and care and the response of filial love and trust demand that intercourse between the human and the Divine which we call prayer. If in our thought we debase humanity and obscure Deity, we create difficulties that we cannot overcome. In the Bible, God and man are brought very close together. Man is wandering, but the Father has not withdrawn himself and left him to perish, but is seeking him; man is rebellious, but the Father's love will win him; man is degraded and lost, but the Father's attributes unite to save and ennoble him. In view of all these facts prayer solves mysteries instead of making them.

The power of prayer, in the divine economy, pre-

sents no special difficulty from this stand-point. What wonder is it that the child's cries move the parents' heart? Would we not wonder if they were unheeded? The appeal to parental love is the strongest that can be made. Evidence of this is abundant all around us. Birds and beasts forget their fears and brave all dangers to answer the cries of their offspring. It is the cry of helpless dependence and stirs the deeps of parental nature. From this we learn what is the divine idea of Fatherhood. And when we take this idea, and divest it of the limitations and weaknesses, with which it is associated in the creature, and link it with the perfection of the Divine nature the power of prayer is only measured by the wants of him who prays. Prayer in this sense is omnipotent. There is nothing incredible in this. The wonder is that we "should be called the sons of God," but not that as children we can

> "Move the arm that moves the world
> To bring salvation down."

The sufficient answer to all doubts, fears and sceptical questionings regarding prayer is, "God is my Father."

The world of matter and of law is arranged on this basis. The fatherhood of God is not an afterthought that is out of harmony with the constitution of things. The world is built in harmony with this relation of man to God and it is governed in the same way. It is an unfathomable, inexhaustible truth that "All things work together for good to them that love God." "All things are yours," says the inspired Apostle.

Among the forces of the universe, prayer is one of the most powerful: it has helped to form the past, it influences the present, and modifies the future. In its true spirit of filial communion, it is a note to which the whole universe vibrates in responsive chords. The difficulties that seem to surround prayer vanish as we follow this thought of divine Fatherhood which Jesus has given us, and there grows upon us an overwhelming sense of its glorious dignity and power. In the language of Chrysostom, we feel to say: "Oh prayer! O blessed prayer! Thou art the unwea-

ried conqueror of human woes, the firm foundation of human happiness, the source of ever during joy, the mother of philosophy! The man who can pray truly, though languishing in extreme indigence, is richer than all beside; whilst the wretch who never bowed the knee, though proudly seated as the monarch of nations, is of all men most destitute."

O, that each of us may be thus enriched by enjoying the privileges and blessings of the "child of a king." The words of the Lord's Prayer have long been familiar to us. Have we the spirit? What is the real meaning of the words "our Father" to us? Do we go to God in the spirit of them and commune with him as his children? We need the Father's sympathy and help. We need the ennobling truth in our lives, that we are allied to the divine that by its influence we may seek to be "holy as God is holy." What grand possibilities, what dignity, what greatness are opened before us. The noblest there is in us is developed and all littleness of feeling rebuked by the thought that God is our father. He who fully understands our needs instructs us thus to commune with him. The way is open for all. Jesus says, "I am the way, no man cometh unto the father but by me." Let us remember that our enjoyments of the blessings which flow from Divine Fatherhood depend largely upon our possession of the responsive spirit of sonship. The filial spirit is the Christly spirit. Those who are in Christ are lifted from a position of alienation and estrangement from God to the plane of filial love and communion. And spiritual strength and progress depend upon the measure of the spirit and nature of him, who in all his life of varied experiences of joy, sorrows, temptations and labors, could look into the face of God in undisturbed calmness of soul and say, "I am not alone for the Father is with me." The love of God is drawing all to the divine salvation and fellowship. Those who are in sin and far away from him may resolve and say, "I will arise and go to my father," feeling sure that he will welcome them. He will rejoice over them, saying, "This, my child, was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found." Those who have

realized the peace of forgiven sin, may press closer to the Father's bosom. It remains for eternity to unfold the fulness and inconceivable richness of the destiny of the child of God. But Jesus has taught us to say, "Our Father." There are glorious rights and priveleges to be enjoyed in this life. "Beloved, *now* are we the children of God." What can we ever be that is nearer to God than children? Whatever the future may disclose, we cannot conceive that our union with God will be closer than it is now. When we shall see him face to face. when the infirmities and limitations of this mortal flesh shall be removed, in the highest exaltations our natures may receive, we cannot conceive of our getting farther than the relation expressed in the words "Our Father." It may mean more to us, as we explore its heights and depths, but will never contain more than it does now. Let us go on, day by day, to find out its riches. This is what Jesus meant in giving us the words to use in prayer. Prayer is to be our daily spiritual exercise, and its meaning and value are to be the daily unfolding in our lives and hearts of the inexhaustible blessings contained in the Fatherhood of God. There is nothing he desires for us so much as that every barrier may be removed and that the love of his fatherly heart may flow to us, with unchecked and unbroken stream. He says to each one:

"Child of my love, lean hard!
Nor fear to weary him who made, upholds,
And guides the universe. Yet closer come,
Thou art not near enough. Thy care, thyself,
Lay both on me, that I may feel my child
Reposing on my heart. Thou lovest me?
I doubt it not; then loving me, lean hard."

PERSONAL SKETCH.

One of the rising preachers of the West Virginia Conference —indeed, one of the foremost men of that body at this time, is the Rev. L. L. Stewart. He was born in Allegheny county, Pa., in 1845. When he was about fourteen years of age his parents moved to Wood county, West Virginia, and engaged in farming. Here the subject of this sketch remained, working upon the farm, and attending school, at various places, until 1870, when he was received into the West Virginia Conference on probation. At this particular point in his life, with the good Jeremy Taylor he could truly say:

"They gave to thee
Myrrh, frankincense, and gold;
But, Lord, with what shall I
Present myself before thy majesty,
Whom thou redeemest when I was sold?
I've nothing but myself, and scarce that neither;
Vile dirt and clay;
Yet it is soft and may
Impression take.
Accept it Lord, and say, this thou hadst rather;
Stamp it, and on this sordid metal make
Thy holy image, and it shall outshine
The beauty of the golden mine."

Brother Stewart's first Circuit was in Marshall county, called Marshall Circuit. It was upon the broad fields of that delightful county that he first proclaimed the unsearchable richesof Christ. The spirit of revival prevailed less or more, at all of his appointments, and the year closed grandly. This, in fact, could be said of all Brother Stewart's appointments. A man of ability, earnestness, energy, and reliability always succeeds.

His next appointment was at Moundsville; next, Benwood; next, Point Pleasant; next, Clifton; next, Fairmont. All these, but one, were Stations; and Brother Stewart remained at most of them the full term allowed by the laws of the Church. He is at present Presiding Elder of the Clarksburg District, which broad field affords an excellent opportunity for the display of his talents as a Gospel minister.

Brother Stewart is a preacher of great originality. He does his own thinking, and always expresses himself with freedom and force. He can creditably fill any appointment in the Church.

SERMON XXI.

BY

REV. L. L. STEWART, P. E.

THEME:—GOD SEEN IN HIS WORKS.

TEXT:—"All thy works shall praise thee. O, Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee."—Psalm cxlv: 10.

Among the thirty-five or forty writers of the Bible, no one referred to the works of God, so frequently and eloquently, as did the Psalmist. In them he saw his goodness, wisdom and power. His early pastoral life among the hills and valleys of Judea, doubtless had much to do in exciting his love for the pure and beautiful, as seen in nature. To qualify him to become the expositor of the heart's most deep, sacred and glowing emotions, God seemed to place him under a variety of circumstances. He spoke for universal humanity. When standing beneath the midnight sky, blazing with constellations, he but echoed the sentiment which has been common to all devout thinking men, when he exclaimed, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. On another occasion we hear him say: "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

Next to the study of God's word, nothing is more instructive, interesting and elevating, than the study of his works. Paul declared "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen,

being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God-head." Not that nature is a sufficient revelation of God. Some knowledge of both nature and revelation, is essential to a proper conception of his character and attributes. God reveals himself to men in three ways. Through his Word, his works, and by an immediate manifestation of himself through the agency of the Holy Ghost. These three, instead of conflicting, or in any way contradicting each other, illustrate and confirm each others testimony, just as the sense of seeing confirms the testimony of hearing, and as the sense of feeling perfects the perception of external realities. Paley, who adduced his strongest argument for the existence of God, from design, as everywhere manifested in his works, has said, "If one train of thought be more desirable than another, it is that which regards the phenomena of nature with a constant reference to a supreme intelligent author." This he considered as the foundation of all that is religious.

God is seen, not only in his Word, but also in his works. From the tiny dew-drops—jewelry of the morning, up to the Pleiades with its sweet influence. From the incipient rill as it bursts from the mountain's brow, to the broad Pacific. From the mighty mountains, as they stand out like silent sentinels against the sky, to the smiling valleys, "stretching in pensive quietness between." From the humble hyssop upon the wall, to the cedar of Lebanon, rocked by the storms of centuries. From all these come a chorus of praise, and revelations of him, who has created and sustains all these by the word of his power. Now in tuneful numbers, now in eloquent voices, nature bears witness of her Creator's praise.

To those who believe in God, and try to see him in his works, nothing can be without significance. From the minutest to the mightiest, there are manifestations of his wisdom, power and love. The great volume is ever unrolled before us, so that he who runs may read. For the old and young, the rich and poor, the wise and the foolish, there are lessons, and he must be a dull scholar indeed who cannot learn something,

and appreciate the sentiment expressed in the lines: "There are tongues in trees, books in running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Who ever stood by Niagara, and looked upon its plunging, whirling, seething waters, and listened to the thundering cataract as it lifted up its eternal anthem to God, and was not impressed with the might and majesty of him who pours out the rivers from their fountains? Or who ever stood upon the ocean's shore, and gazed out upon the broad expanse of water, without thinking of the infinitude of God, and the power of him who holds the ocean in the hollow of his hand? Or who ever from some lofty peak amid alpine scenes viewed the mountains as they lifted themselves above the clouds, covered with eternal snows, and was not over-awed with the majesty and magnitude of God's works, and the power and care of him who has weighed the mountains in his balances? Now, the thought of God, as seen in his works, is inspiring and elevating.

The contemplation of great objects tends to quietness of soul. The sense of the vastness of the sea, the grandeur of a towering mountain, the measureless concave of the midnight sky blazing with constellations, each of these soothes and settles the agitated mind, and fills the soul with sublime musings of him who notes the fall of a sparrow, as well as superintends the destiny of worlds. The devout Christian is ever ready to exclaim, the maker of all these "is my Father and my God;" and yet there are persons, who go through this world without seeing any beauty, or hearing any harmony. In speaking of the world, they call it, "This howling wilderness," "low grounds of sin and folly," "vale of tears," &c. It is a familiar utterance, that this world is full of sin. We should not forget the distinction, that sin is not so much in the world, as in us. When we are as pure as the snow, and as innocent as the laughing waters, the world becomes a scene of beauty and joy; we then realize the words of the prophet, "The mountains and hills break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands." And yet we are gravely informed—even by divines,

that to take any other than a sober view of this world, and life—is unwise and superficial. Be it so, I would rather be considered superficial than ungrateful; and surely nothing can be more ungrateful, than to pass by the wondrous works of God, without consideration; to be surrounded with comfort and beauty, and yet, have no appreciation of them. Suppose a father, at great expense and care, should build a splendid palace, and fill it with every luxury and comfort, should carefully and wisely lay out the grounds, filling them with rare trees and flowers, and after everything is nicely arranged should take his children to this home, and say: "Now children all this is yours, yours to enjoy, yours to preserve, yours to possess;" and after examining the well furnished departments, they should begin to complain, and say: "O, this howling wilderness," "What a miserable place to live in," "What a hard lot is ours." Would that show a feeling of appreciation and gratitude?

This world is a palace which our Father has reared and furnished for the comfort and delight of his children. All his works shall praise him, and his saints are called upon to bless him. Look at the great masters of art, Raphael and Angelo, who almost made the canvas, on which they painted, throb with life. These men have never had superiors in art. Though centuries have passed away, their works have lost none of their charms or beauty. Age only adds to the interest, with which they are studied. There is an intellectual and moral grandeur that centers in these triumphs of human genius, indicating the greatness of the mind that conceived and executed them. But behind the picture was the man; the picture was but an expression of his thoughts. So, as we look out upon this world filled with beauty and harmony, we see an expression of our Father's thoughts. In the soft zephyrs that come to us, fraught with the fragrance of unfolding flowers; in the genial sunshine and gentle dew, we have an expression of God's gracious, loving thoughts. In the deep-toned thunder; in the heaving earthquake; in the burning volcano, and in the terrible cyclone sweeping across our western country, lay-

ing homes and cities in desolation—in all these we have an expression of God's terrible thoughts. In the waving harvests, the luscious fruit upon the trees, the rich, ripe clusters upon the vines, and the golden corn in the shock, we have an expression of God's bounteous, prudential thoughts. God could have made this world without a singing bird, or a gorgeous flower; but instead of withholding any beauty, or in any way stinting his works, he has scattered around us, and for every sense, a profusion of beauty and sweetness. For, be it known, that "many a flower blushes unseen, and wastes its fragrance on the desert air."

The more we study the works of God, the more intense and intelligent will be our love for him. Did not Christ direct the attention of his hearers to the world of nature around them? From the blushing rose, to the silken lily, that nightly drink their cup of nectar from the hand of God, we see more beautiful garments than Solomon ever wore, procured without sowing or reaping, or spinning. Thus he who spoke as never man spake, the great teacher sent from God, seized upon passing events, to illustrate and enforce his spiritual lessons. The sparrow, the lily, the grass, and vine, all furnished themes for his discourses. If it were not beneath the dignity of Christ to speak of the grass, the birds, and flowers, in his sermons, who are we modern preachers, that we can improve upon the style of our Divine Master?

Some men's highest ideal of a "Gospel sermon," is one that deals with the first transgression in Eden, or that condemns the sins of the antediluvians, or hurls anathemas at the Jews. Is it any wonder, that the modern pulpit, in the estimation of some, is dry and stale? If preachers would apply the Gospel to the giant evils of the present age, and seize upon the current events of the day, to enforce the truths of the Gospel, is it not possible, there would be more interested hearers? "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee."

At this point, we institute the inquiry, How do the works of God praise him? The works of God praise him in their obedience to the laws he has imposed

upon them, and by answering the great ends for which they were created. Every useful piece of machinery, every production of art, every good book, magnify and praise their author. The engine upon the railroad, that draws burdens across the continent; the ship upon the seas, which bears the commerce of cities and states; the proud temples of antiquity—all human works in their beauty, permanence and utility, praise their makers.

There seems to be a difference between "praise" and "bless," as expressed by the Psalmist. His works are to "praise" him, and his saints are to "bless" him. Turning to your dictionary, you will find the terms are used interchangably. Yet David recognized a distinction between the terms. The word "bless" is used perhaps in the sense of thanksgiving, a spirit of appreciation to be cherished and manifested by his people, of which inanimate creation is incapable. Every good man is a benediction in the world; still he not only blesses God in his holy life, but his gratitude finds expression in hymns of praise and prayers of thanksgiving. Right here, we find an argument for public worship. His people meet in the house of the Lord, to publicly bless his name, and how often they adopt the language of his servant, and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies." Thus we should call upon all that is within us to "bless" his holy name. The distinction between "praise" and "bless," as we perceive it, is, that while every created thing glorifies God in its place, by obedience to his will, and the purpose of its being. Man rises higher, and pronounces for all a general benediction. Misconceptions of God, have resolved themselves into three historic forms: The Atheistic, Pantheistic, and Theistic. In every age some fragment of these creeds have been found.

First, there is the Atheistic conception of God. The Atheist looks out upon the world, with all its

beauty and harmony, and finds no place for God, sees no evidence of a Supreme overruling Deity. This material universe is but the result of laws that are eternal and inexorable. You ask the Atheist, how came all this order? He replies, "All these things came into existence through the potency of law." There was a time when the atoms now composing this planet, were floating through space; they were attracted by the law of affinity, and are now held to each other by the law of gravitation. Thus the atheist looks upon this world as being governed by blind fate, and man as the helpless victim of law, supreme and immutable, with no explanation to life, and no quiet haven into which he may at last guide his barque.

At the opposite pole of error (for a reaction from one theory generally carries men to the opposite extreme), is the Pantheistic idea of God. As the Atheist cannot see any evidence of God, the Pantheist sees him in all things. To him nature is God, and God is nature. The trouble with the Pantheist is, he confounds God with his works, God and matter is identical. Let one of its modern, American, disciples testify. The late Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I cannot wander into the forest without seeing the presence of God flaming from every bush, nor cross the common without the thrill of rapture, which marks the incoming Deity; nor get out into the open fields, without being an inlet for the inrushing tides of infinite life." An eloquent passage, but not in harmony with revelation. Whenever we accept Pantheism and identify God with his works, we destroy his personality, and hence contradict his own word.

Passing by these extremes, we come, in the next place, to the Theistic conception of God, which is, that a personal God, by a definite act created this world, and upholds and governs all things; that he never has for a moment withdrawn his presence and care from a single atom. The Bible reveals to us a personal God who is above law, and while he is to be seen in his works, he is still above them. Upon the one hand, we are not the helpless victims of law. This world is

not an orphan asylum, where there is no father to hear nor save; and upon the other hand, nature is not our God, but above the tangible objects we see and feel here, there is an infinite Father in whose presence there is fullness of joy.

I now call attention to two propositions:

First, the works of God manifest his wisdom. It must be apparent to the most casual observer, that the wisdom of God is displayed in the adaptation of means to ends. In all animal and plant life, from the simplest to the most complex, there is a plan for each —a complicated adaptation of means to ends. Pass from zone to zone, and see the varied wealth of forms. Each one a study, each one having some peculiar condition of life. No ingenuity of man, nor of all men could have conceived of the work, as it has been done, and when seen, no one can improve upon the work. There is not sufficient mechanical genius in the world to institute such a system, at once revealing the wisdom and goodness of God.

This brings me to the second proposition:

The works of God manifest his goodness. We see the goodness of God in the provisions he has made for our comfort, and welfare. Many of these were here prior to our existence. How he has provided for us during all these weeks, months, and years of our lives. We have been fed at his table, clothed at his wardrobe, and slaked our thirst at crystal streams flowing at our feet. The divine thoughtfulness is all about us for good. He keeps us whether awake or asleep. The beautiful words of our Savior come to us with peculiar force, "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" As much as to say: If the Father's care is extended to the fowls of the air, will he not also care for his children, whom he has created in his own image, redeemed with his own blood? No wonder, the Psalmist in meditating upon the goodness of God, should exclaim, "How great is his goodness!" "O

taste and see that the Lord is good." There is more truth than poetry in the lines of Pope,

> "For me kind nature wakes her genial power,
> Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower;
> Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew,
> The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew,
> For me the mine, a thousand treasures brings,
> For me health gushes from a thousand springs."
> Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me, rise;
> My footstool earth, my canopy the skies."

I have not selected this subject merely for the pleasure of it, nor to excite, in any one, a superficial love for the works of God. I trust I have been prompted by a better motive, governed by a higher aim. My purpose has been to bring God nearer to you; to assist in forming a proper conception of his character and attributes. I do not believe in worshipping nature, but I do believe in a recognition of God in his works. I hold, it would be sheer madness, and moral insanity for a man to study the architecture of this world, and ignore the architect; to endeavor to read the great poem of nature, and not seek to know the author; to admire creation, and not see the Creator; to be charmed with roses and lillies, and not admire him, who is represented in the Scriptures as the "Rose of Sharon," and the "Lilly of the Valley." "All thy works shall praise thee O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee." Amen and amen.

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. Charles P. Masden, son of John and Mary Masden, was born in Kent county, Delaware, in the year 1843. His parents were Methodists, and at the early age of sixteen, he was converted to God at a camp meeting near his early home. At the age of eighteen, and while yet at school, he was licensed to preach the Gospel. The next year he joined the Philadelphia Conference, and was sent, as junior preacher, to Salisbury Circuit, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where he spent two years in extensive revival work. His next appointment was Dorchester Circuit, where he remained one year.

The first Station, which he was called to fill, was Cambridge, the most important point for Methodism on the Eastern Shore—remaining the full term of three years. He next served Fletcher Church, West Philadelphia, and Central Church, Philadelphia. At both these appointments he preached to crowded houses, and began to attract attention, throughout the city, as a popular pulpit orator.

When the distinguished Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage left the Second Reformed Church, Philadelphia, to take charge of the Tabernacle in Brooklyn, the congregation he had served so long and well, unanimously called Brother Masden to succeed him; and in this church, one of the largest in the city, he remained as pastor for eight consecutive years, always preaching to crowded houses. During these eight years, he received four hundred and fifty members into the Church upon confession of faith; and in the meantime edited a popular religious newspaper, which had an extensive circulation, for the time, throughout the country. The amount of work done by Brother Masden while serving this large congregation, was amazing; and yet, he stood up under it, and was always found at his post of duty.

Being converted, educated, and by temperament a Methodist, and realizing that for the sake of health and prolonged usefulness he must change his Church relation, he, therefore, re-entered the ranks of the Itinerancy, and was stationed by Bishop Simpson, in 1879, at Fourth Street M. E. Church, Wheeling, West Virginia, the wealthiest and most influential Church in the State. He remained in Wheeling the full term of three years, and the highest compliment I can give him is to state, that his audiences grew larger each year he remained; and had it been in the power of the Church to have done so, the entire membership

of it would have made him their perpetual pastor. He is a man of positive parts, and is among the most popular ministers of the day.

I subjoin the following personal notice published in the Wheeling *Daily Intelligencer* of November 27th, 1882:

"The Rev. C. P. Masden, who was for three years pastor of Fourth Street M. E. Church, this city, and went from here, in October, to Scranton, Pa., has received and accepted a call to the pastorate of Union M. E. Church, St. Louis. This will give him a much larger field of operation than he could have at Scranton, or indeed anywhere else outside the large cities. Dr. Masden is yet a young man, but has made for himself a reputation as a minister which has extended far and wide. He succeeded Dr. Talmage as pastor of a German Reform Church in Philadelphia, where he remained eight years. From there he came to Wheeling and remained a full term at Fourth Street Church. In both places he sustained himself as one of the most forcible and attractive preachers of the day."

SERMON XXII.

BY

REV. CHARLES P. MASDEN.

THEME:—AN AWAKENED SOUL SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF LIFE.

TEXT:—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—ACTS ix: 6.

The history of the text is familiar to all. Already the scene has passed before you—Saul, of Tarsus, on his way to Damascus, with authority from the high priest to persecute the Church and to imprison Christians—the light from heaven, above the brightness of the noonday sun, that fell upon his pathway—not only a light but a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"—not only a light and a voice, but also a personage. "Who art thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."

This whole phenomenon resolves itself into this Scriptural explanation, that Christ was surrounding his Church and protecting her from her foes, and said to the bloody persecutor: "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." It was Jehovah surrounding the camp of Israel. It was Christ arresting the sinner, disarming the warrior, and enlisting the conquered man as a champion in his own service. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

If you will analyze the text in connection with its history, you will find it contains two general principles, which are embodied in the theme announced. First, It is the language of an awakened soul—an honest search for light—the cry for the Infinise. At

certain flowers point always their painted petals to the sun, and move with him in his daily arc from east to west, governed by a certain law deep within the life of the plants, which draws them naturally toward the pleasant light and warmth by which they must live and grow, so do souls awakened by the Holy Ghost, minds quickened by the truth, turn toward the Cross of Christ, test the great facts of Christianity, and search for the highest possible life.

The query: "Lord, what," &c., is the expression of an awakened soul. Secondly, the text contains the essential conditions of a successful life, viz: consciousness of a life mission; right choice of a vocation; the power of individuality, and the recognition of the divine commission. These four points are embodied in the text, and are plainly taught by the phraseology.

I. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF A LIFE MISSION OR A REALIZATION OF WHAT LIFE IS FOR. "LORD—TO DO."

Life is for doing. This world is to be cleared of its briars and thorns, improved, cultivated, and restored to Eden beauty. Humanity is to be instructed, elevated, comforted, redeemed, saved—till man shall be the crowned saint in glory. This is the design of God and mission of Christianity.

This world is not a floundered ship, from which we are to rescue and save a few of the drowning passengers by the Gospel life-boats, and then leave her to sink into oblivion; but rather a grand old domain, in ruins, it is true—its temples thrown down—its lands run to waste—its beauty defaced—its inhabitants cursed. The duty of man under the mission and reign of the Gospel is to rebuild the walls, reconstruct the temples, cultivate the gardens, sow the fields, plant vineyards, clear forests, bridge rivers, tunnel mountains, join the hands of continents by telegraphic wires, erect schools, build churches, improve civilization, advance religion, save men's souls and restore this earth to its pristine beauty, and make it the temporary home of redeemed man.

What is man here for? What is his earthly mission? How must he live and act toward this wilderness through which his path leads him to his eternal destination? Shall he be a plunderer of the world? Rob it? Get all he can from it? Pluck the flowers, and eat the fruit, and suck it dry and leave it barren? If so, what shall become of those who shall follow? Posterity would have a rough road, and this world would become a dreary Sahara, or wilderness of misery and death. Nay—man is to be a builder, a planter, a sower, a workman, a doer. This world is to be bettered by our having lived in it, both in a material and moral sense. Human life, then, is not for plundering the world, but for improving it. Not to rob it, but robe it. Not to plant thorns and sow nettles in it, but to plant flowers and sow the seeds of immortality.

The general sense of responsibility exists in a greater or less degree in all minds. This is evidenced by the idea and practice of sacrifice among all nations. This exists prior to conversion, and is the basis or ground work of conversion. But there must be more than this general sense of responsibility—there must be personal conviction—a realization of a divine call. Conversion is a divine call. When once a man's soul is touched with the live coal from off the altar, he awakes to the fact that life is not for mere enjoyment, but for doing—not for idle dreams, but for heroic deeds—not for aimless drifting, but for steady sailing.

While in the country, not long ago, I saw trees of various sizes and colors—flowers of various odors and hues—weeds of all sizes and shapes, and grass of different kinds, all growing in the same soil. I said, "Why is it that the same elements of soil produce this variety?" And the only answer I could find was that God was superintending the whole, and that each tree, flower, weed, and blade of grass had its mission in life. It was so. The tree was not for fragrance, nor the flower for shade. The weed could not charm the beholder with beauty, nor the flower so effectually absorb the gasses. The grass could not make fuel, nor the tree nutriment for the beast. Each had its mis-

sion, and without murmuring or dissatisfaction each place was filled. O that men would as naturally and as truly fill their places in life—whether it be preaching the Gospel, administering civil law, practicing medicine, selling goods, tilling the soil, manufacturing articles, building houses or patiently suffering for Christ, which is the highest and most Christ-like mission of all.

In many an humble cottage, or alley, or court, you may find the child of affliction, with but few wants, more contented than those in worldly strife. No murmur—no complaint—thankful for water and bread—with simple faith in God, and fulfilling a mission you and I would shrink from, and men of valor would shun. Even the babe of a few days, that came in loveliness and cast a sunbeam of joy in the home, and then faded so soon, had its mission, and often has done more to thaw selfish hearts and draw parents to heaven than a long and rugged life. Every human life, then, is a divine plan. Every one has a mission to this world. So fall in line—stand in your place—do not envy another. No place so grand for *you* as your own—none you could fill so well. None could make you as useful and happy. Without this conviction of a personal life mission, your life will be aimless, and consequently a failure—a drift life, tossed by the waves of circumstances and tide of events, driven by the winds of doubt, no anchor, no rudder, no compass. Some day the ship will be wrecked. Aim at God's glory. Take your bearings carefully. Know where you are going. One mistake may wreck unnumbered barks that follow in your wake. A wrong direction or bias may land you at hell's gloomy portals, instead of the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem.

II. THE SECOND ESSENTIAL CONDITION OF A SUCCESSFUL LIFE, AS GIVEN IN THE TEXT IS: RIGHT CHOICE OF A VOCATION. "LORD, WHAT?"

While all men may have a general sense of responsibility, and while an awakened soul may be conscious of a life mission, yet the difficult thing is to know for what we are best suited. At what we can best suc-

ceed. In what direction we are to spend our life energies so as to bring in the largest returns to us, and the greatest revenue to the glory of God. "Lord, what?" There are four things which should regulate the choice of a vocation in life:

1. Qualification or natural adaptation. You may tell me that work, industry and perseverance will fit and qualify persons for positions in life which they were before unable to fill. I admit the developing power of work. You will tell me of the necessity and sanctifying influence of the second birth. I admit its importance, yet a great deal depends on the first. I would give due credit to work and to divine grace, yet natural capacity greatly determines the question of success.

Natural adaptation, combined with work and drill, will make the successful life. It would require a great deal of work to make a round ball fit a square hole, and the fit can never be a graceful one. It would require considerable education to train a dog to fly or a fish to run. So it will require wasted energy and time to fit men for places for which they have no natural adaptation.

This world is full of misplaced men. "The pulpit has some that belong by nature to the blacksmith shop. The plow has lost an excellent hand, and the bar has gained a dupe. Some physicians who are very successful in repairing health, would have been also successful in repairing houses."

This is one reason why so many men fail of success. They are in the wrong places. Now, how are we to know for what men are best fitted, and to what vocation they are adapted?

In some cases the talent is so marked, and the inclination so strong as to leave no doubt but the majority have no such bias, and are unconscious of any special qualification. What are they to do? I will name certain guides.

(1.) The absence of those natural faculties requisite for the position, is an evidence that God has not called you to fill it. For instance: weak eyes must preclude the business of the engraver; lameness of limb, the

farmer; lack of voice and sense of sound, the musician; absence of speech or ability to retain thoughts and to express them, the orator.

(2.) Strong aversion to a business is a guide in the choice. I don't mean dislike to exertion, for humanity is constitutionally lazy, and men must learn to love work; but where there is a positive dislike to any vocation, there can be, in the nature of the case, no great success.

(3.) Any deviation from a sense of honor or duty, may be evidence that it is not the place for you. No difference how attractive the position, how profitable the business, if conscience is involved, it is not the place for you.

2. Opportunity. It is often said, "where there is a will there is a way." That is not always true. There cannot be but one President of the United States, and thousands have the will. So opportunity must decide in a degree a man's occupation. Opportunity is a convenient time or favorable occasion, and, when once past, may never come again. Work at the right time, and everything assists you. Success is parent of success, and on you go to victory. But if you work at the wrong time—let the opportunity pass—you fail. Failure gives birth to failure, and your chance is lost.

"Opportunity is like a favoring breeze springing up around a sailing vessel. If the sails are all set, the vessel is driven on to port. If the sailors are asleep or ashore, and the sails all folded, the breeze may die away, and when they would go on, they cannot. Their vessel stands as idle as a painted ship on a painted sea." So, if you let the opportunity for study and mental development pass, if you fail to improve the season of youth, you will have no wind to drive the bark of life toward the port of success.

Some people imagine that opportunity is a golden chariot, drawn by the steeds of good luck, and some day will pause for them as they loiter in the shade on life's roadside, and the good angel of fortune will pick them up and put them on cushioned seats of dignity, or lay them on "flowery beds of ease," and drive on to success. Opportunity is no such thing,—but simply

an open door, with an invitation written above it, "Come, for all things are now ready." Within are the golden harvest fields, ready for the reaper's sickle.

How often do we hear people say what they are going to do "when their ships come in"—as if opportunities would come and unload their treasures in their laps—when the fact is, they have no ships out at sea. You must first build your ships—cut down the timber, hew the beams, frame the hull, erect the mast, weave the sails, furnish the anchor, rudder and compass, and then act as pilot yourself and send them out to distant ports, and they will come back richly freighted with the spices of other lands and the gold of other climes, and enrich you for your industry. Improve the passing hour—the present opportunity. Let this be the motto of your life, "Now is the accepted time."

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bounded in shallows and in miseries."

3. Self-interest. There is a great deal of cant in these times about the death of self. That would be the greatest misfortune that could come to an individual. Self-hood should never die. You should be a separate and distinct person in your thinking, acting, working and enjoying.

Selfishness is a sin. There is a legitimate and sublime self-interest, and there is a wicked selfishness. The forbidden selfishness is the exclusive regard for personal interest, supreme self-love, which leads to a disregard for others and the welfare of society at large. The legitimate and sublime self-interest is acting so as to bless humanity, and at the same time result in the highest good to the actor. No one has thought deeply upon the philosophy of life without observing the relation of this sublime self-interest and Christian unselfishness which blesses others. A man must learn before he can teach. We must have before we can give. The general good demands the highest prosperity and happiness of the individual. Hence self-interest is not to be forgotten in choosing a vocation. A true self-interest is in harmony with Gospel self-denial. If

you can better your condition and be of equal service to society and the world, you do it. It is your duty to do it. If it is no violation of conscience and diminution of usefulness, and you can get a larger salary, it is your duty to accept.

It seems as if this were intended, in the Divine economy, as an incentive to industry and self-elevation. You remove human incentives and personal rewards, and you dwarf humanity and hinder even the progress of religion.

Take two clergymen. One cares nothing about reputation or salary—if such a thing be possible—is prompted by no earthly ambition—a kind of inhuman being. The other full of aspiration, not willing to be second-rate—prompted by a noble ambition. Now, who will do the more good? The man who couples self-interest and personal success with spiritual good. He will take hold of men as well as of God. The right hand will be on the throne, the left take hold of sinking humanity.

Take two boys at school. One cares nothing about his standing in his class, about prizes or medals. He studies not for any human motive, but for duty's sake, and to be wise in the world to come. Another does not intend to be excelled—is determined to take the honors of his class. Which will be the better student and the more useful man? Facts answer.

Hence there is a sublime self-interest which becomes an incentive to duty and activity, and is not to be ignored in choosing a vocation.

4. Usefulness. When the good of humanity is sacrificed to self-interest, it becomes selfishness, and is a sin against God and man, and a curse to the individual. Usefulness is not to be interfered with, but augmented by this self-interest. A good soldier does not fight battles for the sake of pay, but for his country's good, yet he ought to be paid. Doctors like fees, yet on the whole they desire to cure the sick. Preachers cannot live without salary, yet the first motive in preaching must not be dollars and cents. Usefulness is not to be sacrificed to self-interest. You must get

in that position where you can shine the farthest, do the most good, reach the largest number.

These are the questions to be settled: *For what am I suited?—Qualification. What can I do?—Opportunity. Will it pay me?—Self-interest. Is it best for society, the world, and for God's glory—Usefulness.* These should regulate your choice.

The traveler in the Alps, walking in the early morning and seeing the white clouds changing around the mountain-peak, cannot distinguish at a distance which is the summit and which the cloud. But after the sun climbs the heavens and lifts the wreathing vapor, and drawing nearer he sees at last, sharply defined against the pure sky, the one clear cone. So with us. Cloud after cloud delights us in the morning of life; but when the noontide comes, the one thing we have to do will stand out boldly and prominently before us, and challenge effort. Having found our life work, let us settle down to steady toil, drawing our inspiration from the Cross of Christ, and our work will be eternal.

III. THE TEXT INFORMS US THAT ANOTHER ELEMENT OF A SUCCESSFUL LIFE IS "INDIVIDUALITY"—"ME."

I believe in the committee of one. What is everybody's business is nobody's. Individualism is lost in associationism. Some men lose their consciences in stock companies or corporations. They sin in the aggregate, and wash their hands in the waters of innocency.

So in churches. The man who does next to nothing takes credit to himself for what others have done. He gives a penny in a collection and then, with an air of charming hypocrisy, says, "We raised one thousand dollars last Sunday." He never offers a prayer and points a sinner to Christ, and says, "We have had a gracious revival." Is that honest? This is one of the dangers of our day. We do too much by committees, and not enough alone. (The individual, conscience, duty, development and reward are blended with the great mass.) We cannot repent by committees; we cannot believe by proxy; we cannot escape

responsibility by going to church. We will not die in companies. One by one we pass over the river. We will not be judged as assemblies, but as individuals. We will wear our own crowns in glory, and not appear in borrowed array.

Hence I am authorized to say, that, any theory of life which tends to destroy and not to assert the individuality of man, is inhuman and anti-Christian. But we must distinguish between the true and false individuality. We must remember the double nature in man—the soul life and the sensuous life. The latter has a seeming life which is actual death, and the former a seeming death which is actual life. Hence the language of Scripture, "He that seeketh to save his life shall loose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall find it." That is the development of the unselfish nature—is life and true individuality.

The selfish man does not preserve his individuality, for his life is sure to grow less. He loses his friends—the world drops him, humanity shuns him; alone he lives, alone he dies, and the wind and rain which wear out the letters on his tomb, are the only haunters of his pretentious grave. Hence, individuality is not a great bundle of selfishness—is not a flaunting egotism—is not personal isolation—but man escaping the curse of self involvement and spreading his being over the world. The stronger the centre and more intense the heat and light, the more the radiation. Therefore, let me urge you to be yourselves; your peculiarities or eccentricities, as men call them, are your divine endowments for personal use and success. Never let another do your duty and wear your laurels. "Let no man take thy crown."

IV. LASTLY, THE TEXT INFORMS US THAT ANOTHER ESSENTIAL CONDITION OF A SUCCESSFUL LIFE IS A RECOGNITION OF THE DIVINE COMMISSION. "LORD, WHAT WILT THOU?"

There is but one sovereign. We are sent. We not only owe allegiance to that God over all, but we work at his expense and fulfill his orders. We are ambassadors. We represent the highest court of the universe.

We are divinely commissioned, as truly as if the divine hands had been upon our heads, and we had heard the voice of Christ saying, "Go, preach the Gospel, till the ground, build houses, navigate the seas, weave cloth, teach the young—'whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'" Never forget this fact, "sent of the Lord." The absence of this realization is an explanation of the dissatisfactions in life, and the jealousy and strife for positions. Let a young man start in life with this conviction that he is working for eternity—that the eye of God is upon him, and every act will be significant. Life will be intensified, doubled, magnified under the inspiration. Don't forget your authority, God's will; your supply, divine power. Write his motto on your life, "Sent of the Lord," and your present position in the world and society will become a lofty pedestal, from which your light will shine out far and wide to guide and comfort the weary and despondent travelers far down the valley and away from home. Your present crosses will change from rough hewn beams to flower wreathed and rose-garlanded ladders of spiritual ascent, more beautiful and populous than those Jacob saw at Bethel. With a consciousness of a life mission, with the right choice of a vocation, with true individuality, with the realization of the fact, "sent of the Lord"—your life cannot be a failure; for the divine purpose, and power, and promises are all pledged, and you shall overcome, and be crowned a victor at last. Let your past be full of thanksgivings, your present full of joy, your future full of welcomes.

"So live that when thy summons comes
To join the innumerable caravan,
That moves to the silent realms of shade,
Thou go not like the quarry slave
At night, scourged to his dungeon;
But sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust,
Approach thy grave like one who wraps the drapery
Of his couch about him and lies down to pleasant dreams."

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. George Edgar Hite, was born September 17th, 1851, in Guyandotte, West Virginia. He was started to school so young that he does not remember when he could not read. The most of his life, from the time he was first put to school, until he was seventeen years of age, was spent in the select and public schools of his native town. At this time, through the kindness of a friend, a scholarship was secured for him in Marshall Academy, now known as the State Normal School of Huntington. Having previously chosen the profession of medicine as a calling in life, he took an optional course in the Academy. During his stay at this school, he paid particular attention to the study of chemistry, in which he made considerable proficiency.

All the time that could be spared from the studies he was pursuing in school, he assiduously devoted to the study of the usual text books which are prescribed for a medical student, before attending lectures. Eighteen months, or more, he was a student of medicine under the preceptorship of Dr. A. B. McGinnis of Guyandotte—one of the most successful practitioners in the State. He very naturally holds the Doctor, who was one of the warmest friends of his early youth, in grateful remembrance to this day. Brother Hite made rapid progress in the study of his chosen profession,—the healing art. His parents not being in circumstances to furnish the money for his course at a Medical College, he began teaching school to supply himself with the necessary funds, with which to complete a thorough medical training, before entering upon the practice of his chosen profession.

Up to this time he had not made any religious profession, or connected himself with the Church, though he had been associated, in some way, with the Sabbath School all his life. In February 1870, during a revival conducted by Rev. Samuel E. Steele, he was brought under a deep and pungent conviction, which, after a long and desperate struggle, was followed by his conversion. He united with the M. E. Church, and at once became an active and useful member. He soon attracted the attention of his pastor and brethren in the Church, by his gift of prayer, and readiness of expression in experience meetings.

Not long after his conversion, his mind underwent a complete change. He lost interest in his medical books, and developed an absorbing interest in religious and theological studies. He read, with avidity, nearly everything of a religious character

which came within his reach. At last, in spite of himself, the conviction seized his mind that the Great Disposer of men's lives designed him not to be a healer of men's bodies, but to carry to sin-sick humanity the "Balm of Gilead." He was greatly troubled at the thought of incurring the displeasure of his old friend Dr. McGinnis, who had taken no little pride in his pupil. He was also troubled with the idea that to abandon the calling for which he had been so long preparing, for one about which he knew scarcely aynthing, would subject him to unkind criticisms. He also dreaded to inform his parents of the change of his mind, for he felt convinced that they would strongly oppose the idea of his becoming a preacher. These things, together with personal difficulties, greatly distressed his mind; but at last, feeling that a woe was upon him if he refused to preach the Gospel, he announced the change of his purpose as to his life work, and his intention of entering the ministry at once.

Brother Hite was received on trial in the West Virginia Conference, at its session in the city of Wheeling, March 1872, Bishop Simpson presiding; and was appointed, as junior preacher, on the Knottsville and Fetterman Circuit, Rev. E. S. Wilson being preacher in charge. He labored with acceptability on this work, and at the earnest request of the Quarterly Conference was returned the following year with Rev. C. J. Trippett as senior preacher. He was next appointed as pastor in charge of Barboursville Circuit, Guyandotte District. His labors on this work were successful. Many were converted and added to the Church. He was next appointed to Rowlesburg Station, Morgantown District. In the fall of this year, he resigned his charge and went to Drew Theological Seminary, but feeble health and other weighty considerations, influenced him soon to return. He resumed the pastorate of the Rowlesburg Church, and during the winter conducted a revival of unusual power,—over one hundred were received into the Church that year. His next appotntment was Fulton Circuit, Wheeling District. He remained the full term of the pastorate here; and from this place was appointed to Zane Street Station, Wheeling.

The following June he was united in marriage with Miss Mary E. Phipps, an accomplished young lady of Wheeling. His pastorate at Zane Street Station was a very laborious one, on account of the financial embarrassment in which he found the Church, when he became its pastor; but at the end of his term, every dollar of the debt was paid, the church was handsomely frescoed and generally improved, and the society was left in an unusually prosperous condition. In this station, though quite a young man, Brother Hite made for himself an enviable reputation in his Conference. The next year, 1881, he was sent to Chapline Street Station, Wheeling, where he is now rendering acceptable and efficient service. His congregations are always large, and he never fails to have gracious revivals in all his fields of labor.

Brother Hite is a successful preacher. He is a close student, and goes into his pulpit with a fresh message for his congrega-

tion, and therefore never fails to interest and instruct them. He has studied both Greek and Latin under private instruction, and in the Latin has madb considerable proficiency. He ha a voice of unusual compass, and speaks with great freedom and earnestness. He is thoroughly devoted to his profession, and has the courage, in the pulpit and on the platform, to attack sin in all its forms. He is among the most popular ministers of his age in West Virginia.

SERMON XXIII.*

BY

REV. GEORGE E. HITE.

THEME:—CHRISTIANITY'S CHALLENGE TO UNBELIEF.

TEXT:—"Which of you convinceth me of sin."—John viii: 46.

The keen-scented blood-hound never more savagely or untiringly followed the trail of the fugitive slave, than were the footsteps of Jesus hounded by the chief priests and scribes who were eager for his blood. They set hired lawyers to entrap him in his conversation. In almost every public audience that he addressed, during the three years of his ministry on earth, there were present paid or volunteer spies, listening with eagerness to catch some word by which they might bring a charge against him. With the cunning of foxes and the stealth of tigers, they followed his every movement. They knew where he was, and what he was doing, nearly every hour of his time on earth, after he began his public ministry. Scarcely a word fell from his lips they did not hear, and report to the Council. They knew every house he entered—they knew whether he ate with washed or unwashed hands. They knew everybody with whom he conversed and the theme of conversation. But it was all of no avail. He foiled them at every point. This maddened them beyond control. Christ fully compre-

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hended the situation; he knew the animus of the hierarchy toward him, but he was not afraid. In that courage that can only come from the consciousness of the perfect integrity of life, and purity of motive, Christ fearlessly confronted these spies, and challenged them to point to a single flaw in his life. False and malicious slanders must down before the steady gaze of innocence and truth. They never dared, with all the unblushing effrontery they manifested toward him, to accuse him to his face of violations of the moral law. The only charge they could bring against him, for which they could find any ground in truth, was that he disregarded the ritual and rubric of ecclesiastical conventionalism of his time. He would not trammel himself with the burdensome and useless ceremonial—touching the observance of the Sabbath, fastings and ablutions. He calmly pointed to his life and confidently asked, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" And he was fully as willing to have his teaching subject to a close and critical inspection as his life. For he was sure that they could not say that the doctrines that he taught, when accepted and reduced to practice, tended to make men more false and vain, and hateful and selfish.

The challenge that Christ gave to the Pharisees is the challenge of Christianity to her enemies to-day, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" The Christian religion does not shrink from candid investigation and fair test. It does not dread the broad light of day; it courts the most careful examination. There is no attempt at secrecy; nothing hidden or kept away from the eyes of the world. The Bible is an open book, and he who will, may read and judge for himself. In any system of doctrine, or set of principles, the end sought is a matter of prime importance with us, in trying to make up an opinion as to whether we will give to the same our approval and confidence.

I. WHAT IS THE AIM OF CHRISTIANITY?

Is it the weal or woe of the human race it seeks? If it can be shown that it strikes at the happiness and freedom of the masses, and seeks to create castes

and class distinctions, to build up a hierarchial despotism, the enslavement and degradation of man, instead of his highest elevation and fullest liberty, then let it be blotted from the love and faith of mankind. Let not tongue and pen cease their labors, until the pernicious system is rooted out, and thrown aside as one of the many false and wicked religions that from time to time have made their appearance in the world. But on the other hand, if it can be demon strated that it is the amelioration of man—his physical, intellectual and moral good—it seeks, securing unto him liberty of conscience, and civil freedom, and all the rights and immunities which an impartial and merciful God has willed to him, as his inalienable inheritance—mitigating his sufferings, lessening his cares and lightening his burdens, then I ask where is the miscreant that dare lift pen or voice against the Christian religion, or attempt to rob his troubled and burdened race of this God-given boon? Such is the aim of our holy religion. Its only mission, to a lost world, is the bettering of human condition in every direction. It comes to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, visit the sick and set the prisoner free. I challenge any man to prove to the contrary. The man has not lived, does not live, and will not live, who after carefully studying our holy Christianity, can rise up and declare its aim to be the aggravation of man's troubles, the increasing of his burdens, the intensifying of his sufferings, the dwarfing of his intellect, the enslavement of his conscience, and the pollution of his affections. I am aware that for ages the whole civilized world was under the heel of an ecclesiastical despotism, which was as foreign to the spirit of Christ as hell is foreign to heaven. Papacy ruled the kingdoms of this world with a rod of iron. The Pope in his sumptuous palace in the Eternal City, was the acknowledged "King of kings and Lord of lords," over all the earth. He made and unmade kings at will. The nations waited his nod. Restrictions hard to be borne were laid on the governments of earth. Man was deprived of the last vesitige of liberty, whether religious or civil.

The dungeons were foul with the stench of dead men whose only crime was the holding of views concerning the Bible not authorized by the holy (?) Catholic Church of Rome. The flames fed on their flesh; the sword, the guillotine were drenched with their blood. The very earth was drunk with the blood of the saints. I have read the sad story of the persecutions of the Vadoise, the terrible Spanish Inquisition, the sickening horrors of St. Bartholomew, and other crimes which blacken the pages of Church history, committed not alone by Romanists, but in some instances by Protestants as well,—done in the name of Christ. But Christ gives no sanction whatever in his teachings to violence crime, as instruments for the conversion of the world. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal."

What similarity is there between the ferocious and murderous spirit—which found vent in the deeds of cruelty and blood just described—and the lamb-like spirit of the Son of God? Christ came into the world to bind up the broken hearted, to open prison doors and preach deliverance to the captives. His aim is to seek and save that which was lost. Where, I ask, is there anything in such an unselfish, laudable aim which justifies the savage and relentless war that modern unbelief wages against Christianity?

II. WHAT OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION?

Let us next inspect these doctrines. We found no grounds for indictment in the aims of Christianity, can we find it here? An attempt, in this place, to run the whole range of Christian doctrine, giving to each that attention its importance merits, would be to betray our ignorance, and far transcend the limits of a discourse of this kind. Each of these precious doctrines deserve a volume; and we do not know of one to which some Christian scholar has not paid this deserved tribute. We can only review the principal ones, and these but briefly and imperfectly.

1. The existence of God. The first verse of the Bible reveals the sublime idea of a God—infinite, self-existent, source and head of all things. No method

of argumentation is employed to prove the fact. The statement is positively made, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" and then the inspired penman proceeds to give the successive acts by which this system of material things around us was made. There are men who reject this fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, because it is a mystery. They have tried to solve this great mystery, and have been baffled, and for this reason they tell us they will not believe it. It is granted that the secret of God's existence is a mystery no finite mind can grasp and lay bare. But I ask the votaries of the god Reason which is the most rational thing to do, (I employ the words of another), "accept this one great mystery, or reject it, and involve ourselves in a maze of a million mysteries. Equally inexplicable—in every blade of grass, grain of sand, or creeping thing, not one of which has a solution without the concession of this one infinite and fundamental mystery."

A German scientist, in an essay on "The limits of Natural Philosophy," read before the "Berlin Academy of Sciences," propounds to his brother scientists seven world problems, which no one of them has been able to solve: (1) The existence of matter and power. (2) The source of motion. (3) The beginning of life. (4) The manifest proofs of design in nature. (5) The origin of simple perception. (6) Logical thinking and the origin of language. (7) Free will. Concede the existence of an eternal, almighty God—origin and sustainer of all things, and all these mysteries are readily solved. Ignore the Creator, and there is no solution for them. One cannot but be both amused and pained by reading the baseless theories advocated by infidel science, in its vain endeavors to solve the problem of the universe by leaving the great factor God out. Says the author of a very remarkable book, written in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints: "The mind of man needs rest, and must find a sure abiding place somewhere from the harrassing plague of doubt and uncertainty, or else wear itself out in perpetual agitation. There is but one safe po-

sition, either in philosophy or religion where the soul can find rest, and that is to merge all Nature's mysteries back into the one great mystery of Nature's God. Let us seek that resting place as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

2. Free agency and depravity. These are doctrines of the Christian religion. They are unquestionably established by experience and observation. As to the freedom of the will, this is the special boast of infidelity. This doctrine of free choice is not only in harmony with our reason and experience, but it is in the most perfect accord with infidel philosophy, which seeks to make a god out of man by descanting on "the sovereignity of man," "the sacredness of man," etc., to which I offer no objection. Man *is* a sovereign—he is sacred and noble; and yet there seems a strange inconsistency in this, when we remember his contemptible origin. A certain school of scientists (so called) tell us that man is a lineal descendant of the baboon, a prince of the royal line. If that be true, is it not high time that such a low sprung individual cease to glorify himself? For if that old maxim of philosophy be true, viz: that "like produces like," the conclusion which forces itself upon him, to say the least, is not complimentary to his lordship.

As to the doctrine of depravity, I admit that it is not pleasant to contemplate. Especially are the symbols employed by the Bible to represent the moral condition of the unrenewed heart distasteful to the proud spirit of man. A grave full of dead men's bones—a human body covered with putrefaction from head to foot—a cage of unclean birds. But a fact is none the less a fact because it is unpleasant. The pleasant things we hear are much easier to be believed than the unpleasant. News may be brought to the master of a vessel that she is sinking—unpleasant news, indeed. He dislikes to believe it, but this does not save the ship from sinking. You are up town, the fire alarms strike. Some one comes rushing into your place of business and says, "It's your house that is on fire." You say, "That is unpleasant tidings, therefore I will not believe it." But the house burns down, nevertheless. Your child is sick; you call in a physician; he makes a careful

examination of the case; his face grows serious, and at last hesitatingly tells you the child must die. Sad tidings indeed. You say, "I cannot, I will not believe it." Yet this does not save the little one's life. That strange doctrine that man, instead of beginning life with a spotless moral nature, began at the greatest possible remove from such a state—moral zero, and has been gradually climbing up to that ideal condition, meets its death in the fact that in the ascent of life, humanity reached the summit of moral perfection more than eighteen hundred years ago, in the person of the incarnate Son of God.

This doctrine of depravity, I claim, is corroborated by the deranged and chaotic condition of the moral world. All order and harmony are gone, and perpetual unrest and tumult reign. How has this been brought about? You may search, but will search in vain for a parallel elsewhere in nature. Order and contentment reign throughout. Everything else seems in harmony with itself and its environments. Gaze into yonder sky at the stars floating like white lilies on the surface of a clear, calm lake. How tranquil they seem. No tumult or strife there, but all in harmonious intercourse with each other. Turn away from this radiant scene, and look upon faithful mother earth. Age on age through the mighty reaches of immensity. She has been making her solemn rounds, never varying the millioneth part of a second in a thousand years—never failing to bring to us winter and summer, seed time and harvest. What bountiful provision she makes for the sustenance of every living thing, with unstinted hand yielding up to man the treasures of her bosom. How contented and satisfied in her lot. Put down thine ear and listen close and long, but never a sound or a murmur of complaint wilt thou hear from the lips of patient earth. Go to the cattle that graze upon a thousand hills. Tranquil and satisfied they pass their time away. The flowers bloom and the birds sing to tell us of their peace and joy. All nature is contented and happy. Her stars are shining, her seas are smiling, her rivers are laughing, the tall cedars of Lebanon are clapping their hands for

joy. Let everything that has breath join in the harmonious song of praise that nature sings to nature's God.

But hark, there is a discordant sound—a break has been made in the harmony. From whence does it come? Man alone, amidst all this harmony, is discordant, out of tune with his environments. O, man, why is it that all other things are in their way happy in their lot, and thou art deprived of peace! Thy soul a battle-field where opposing forces wage a ceaseless strife. How does it come that the servants of the king are all satisfied and happy, and only the king himself is wretched? Answer, if thou canst. Thou failest; I am not surprised. The Bible will answer for thee in tho doctrine of the fall. Unhappy being, question thine own heart, and read the dark pages of human crime and thou canst no longer doubt.

3. Look next at the doctrine of the Atonement. If Christianity came only to make to us a revelation of our fallen condition, telling us of the impassable gulf digged between us and God, shutting out forever all hope of mercy and pardon, and had no further communication to make, it would be a sad office to preach such a Gospel. But I thank God such is not the case. In the same chapter that announces man's fall, I read of a gracious plan for his recovery. Though in the exercise of free choice man superinduced sin upon himself and by sin separation from God and eternal death, yet "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Yes, glory to God! for he hath redeemed us not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ. Tell me unbelief, what fault hast thou to find with this gracious truth? Here, and here only, canst thou find an answer to that greatest of all questions—which rises by intuition in the heart of the civilized and savage alike, "What must I do to be saved?" Men searched in vain for an answer to this question of questions among the other religions of the earth.

Philosophy tried but failed to answer, turning,

away in sorrow from the false religions and vain philosophies of earth. Man next appealed to Nature to answer; but Nature had no answer to give. With an eloquence peculiar to himself, another tells the story of nature's helplessness in the presence of the pleading heart of humanity: "Sweltering nations have knelt at the feet of the Himalayan mountains for ages asking that question, but the mountains made no response. Not one of the old peaks stooped down to lift a single soul on its shoulders into heaven. Still the people cry, and still the mountains are silent. "What must I do to be saved?" Nations in blindness and death, have knelt on the shores of the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Bengal Bay, moaning out that question; but still there was nothing in all the rumbling surf that responded. The winds mocked, and the waves spit their spray in the face of the dying nations. And so the cry went round the world, but the desert spoke not, and the Alps were silent—and the stars were dumb—all the caverns and hills and seas but echoed back the dismal cry, "what must I do to be saved."

Eighteen hundred years ago a prisoner in jail at Philippi, with back bleeding and feet in the stocks, gave the only answer to the question to be had in heaven above, or the earth beneath: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

"Salvation let the echo fly
The spacious earth around,
Until all the armies of the sky
Conspire to raise the sound."

4. The Scriptures contain the sublime doctrine of the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul. What offense do these glorious doctrines inflict on frail, dying humanity? Why should it be a displeasing thing to you my friends, to be told that these bodies of such beauty and grace, upon which has been expended such infinite skill of workmanship, and which you so fondly love; upon which you lavish such tender attention, are not like the worms to be thrust into the earth to moulder back to the elements from which they were originally made, to be-

come again a part of the common dust; but on the contrary, are to be lifted up in the last day, reorganized in celestial and deathless form; and rising from the scenes of their earthly existence, shall enter the skies and begin the blissful experience of their new and ceaseless life. To my mind no hope can bring such consolation to our hearts as the coffin lid closes down and shuts from our tearful eyes the face and form of our dead kindred for all time, as the hope of the resurrection of the dead. We cannot deny that it is a stupendous mystery; but shall this be sufficient to prove it a baseless dream? Which is the greater mystery, your creation or your resurrection? You cannot deny your existence, but the ground upon which some reject the resurrection, viz: that of mystery, would compel them to deny that they *are*. O, relentless sceptic take not away this consoling hope! If it is a delusion, it will not hurt us to believe it, but take it from us, and we sit in the thick gloom of despair, with the angel of hope dead in our hearts.

As to the immortality of the soul, what can be more in harmony with our highest reason and best feelings? What is there in this doctrine derogatory to the dignity of man, or in what way does it interfere with his interests on earth? An eternal life under such conditions as by the Word of God are predicated of the future state, is to my mind the most inspiring and helpful hope that blesses the heart of humanity. Why should a man want to die—to cease to be, when the narrow bounds of his earthly life is reached. What object do men have in denying the future life? Says Massilon, the famous French divine, "We have only to trace the origin of an opinion to ascertain whether the interests of truth or passion have established it on the earth." Go upon the streets of this city to-morrow,—begin with the purest and noblest souls that bless the race, and descend the scale until the vilest and lowest spirits that curse and shame the name of man are reached and put these questions, Do you believe that human conduct is a matter of lively interest and minute record with God? Do you believe there is a future life, and that the weal

or woe of that life will be determined by this record? At the top of the scale your questions will be answered, with a possible exception, in a great number, in the affirmative; but as you descend, doubts will be expressed, and before the bottom is reached, they will be flatly negatived. It is not the good men in this world who want to abolish the future state revealed in the Bible. Is there no significance in this? Take yourself: When is it that the future state seems more desirable and reasonable? Is it when under the sway of some vile passion, when conscience is lashing thee for some carnal indulgence? Or is it when ruled by thy better self—following the guidance of right reason, thou art conscious of the rectitude of thy life and the purity of thy motives? Am I not right? Ah, my friends, these men who tell us that conscience is a myth, the soul a little flame that will flicker and go out in death, that the future state is the dream of the enthusiast and hell a delusion, have not reached these astounding discoveries by consulting Virtue and Reason, for these unite in enforcing the Bible doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

5. The last of these precious doctrines of the Christian religion of which I will now speak is, the superintending providence of God. Though there are many inscrutable things about it, yet it seems that it cannot in any way, be offensive to the feelings or minds of men. To me it is a pleasing thought that this world, with its varied forms of life, animal and human, man and beast, with their many and ever recurring wants are not left entirely at the mercy of fixed and feelingless law, but that we are all closely superintended by the great Father, God. Let it be a delusion, and let him scoff who will, I cannot give up the faith that the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord, and that the same hand that clothes the lily and feeds the birds, will feed and clothe me. God has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee; lo, I am with you always."

"So beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

"I know not where his islands
Lift their fronded palms in air,
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care."

O boasting unbelief, these are the doctrines of the Gospel we preach. What of wrong—what of harm have they inflicted on the lost race of Adam? Speak if thou canst, and indict one or all of these doctrines of hurtful influence upon human life.

We have failed to find any thing either in the aims or doctrines of Christianity that would deprive it of that reverence and affection with which the masses of mankind have regarded it for nearly twenty centuries.

III. LET US NEXT STUDY ITS EFFECTS UPON THE HEART AND LIFE.

If a system, whether of philosophy or religion, be right in its aims, sound in its doctrines, good in its effects, who dare assault and revile it. The Christian religion has produced a more beneficient and salutary effect upon National and individual life than all the other reformatory and civilizing influences combined. What has the Vedic writings and the Shastra done for India, or the Zend Avesta, the Koran or the writings of Confucious for Persia, Africa, Turkey and China, as compared with what the Bible has done for England, Scotland and the United States of America?

Christianity has breathed its genial breath upon the desert places of earth, and made them to rejoice and blossom as the rose. It touches humanity on all sides, and wherever it touches it imparts purity and hope. It has permeated our literature and has refined and purified it. It has succeeded in some way in incarnating its gracious principles in our laws, and as a consequence, we have the best system of jurisprudence in the world. But no where has it done a more blessed work for man than in the home. Oh, how our homes have been hallowed and sanctified by the teachings of the Gospel. How the tender and sacred relations of husband and wife, child and parent, brother and sister, have been revealed and established by the Christian religion. What is the home, what are the family relations in those lands where no Christ is known and

loved? But I must not keep too far from you in this part of my subject—Let us come closer together and study the divine effects of Christianity. First in the transformation of character. How does it operate here? Does it make man better or worse? There is not a man under the broad, blue sky to-day, who can produce a solitary instance where the individual was made more licentious, vain, false, or selfish by this sacred book. But I could summon from this presence witnesses to testify to the fact without a single exception, human character, wherever brought under the magic power of the Christian religion, has been exalted and made all glorious to behold. I know a man who, at one time, was the most profane and unclean of speech, indecent of action, drunken and abandoned wretch in the community in which he lived. But he is not so now. A work as miraculous as raising the dead, has taken place in that man's heart and life. He has been converted to God. His tongue is free from profane speech. His conversation is chaste, and his whole deportment is sober and virtuous. He is a kind and an affectionate husband and father, an honorable citizen, a Christian gentleman. His old comrades in crime—the gambler, the debauchee—are compelled to believe, let them sneer never so much, that his religion has lifted him up and far away from the degradation he once shared along with them. I challenge any man to find fault with a work like that.

Such examples of moral heroism and self abandonment as have been produced by the religion of the Cross, can be found no where else. Time would fail me to call the names of the noble men and women, who, in all ages, have counted their lives as nothing for Christ's sake. Under the inspiration of Christianity, schools of learning have been founded, hospitals and asylums have been opened, wounds have been healed, tears have been wiped away, prison doors have been opened, and slaves set free. Amid the afflictions and bereavements incident to the life we now live, what has been such a stay and comfort to humanity as the religion of Christ? Could we live without it? Last summer I stood by the bed-side of a young man (a

member of the church of which I am now pastor), who was dying from an injury he had sustained a few days before. For a few hours after the accident the physicians were unable to determine whether the hurt was fatal or not. At last, symptoms developed that told the sad story—he must die. He received the announcement without a tremor of alarm. I saw him call his young wife to his side for a last farewell on earth. She came with their sweet babe in her arms, so soon to be fatherless. The dying man took the little one in his arms, and held it for a moment to his heart, and then handed it back to its mother. He then took a tender leave of his devoted wife and sorrowing friends, and met death as tranquilly as if he knew himself to be only falling into a sweet sleep. Since I witnessed that triumphant death, I wonder why all men do not live the life of the righteous, that the last end may be like his.

And yet we are told, after all we are able to say in its defense, we must give it up. There are those who say it is a wicked delusion—a cruel hoax—a superstition, which must be destroyed; and they are ransacking heaven and earth for arguments to break its hold upon the reverence and faith of the world. Will they succeed? Never. Millions of loving hearts, who have sadly laid their kindred in the grave, are comforting themselves with the hope of the resurrection of the dead. The unfortunate and down-trodden of earth find their only happiness here. The weak and tempted know no other refuge. Men who have suffered failure and defeat in this life, are only saved from its despair by the hope of a life to come. These will never give up the Bible. Ah! no, friends, be not dismayed. Men may attack our holy religion, but they will never conquer it. The earth may dissolve, the heavens pass away as a parchment scroll, but God himself hath said, "One jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. Joseph Lee was born and educated in Ireland. He is now 35 years of age and is stationed at Buckhannon, W. Va. Brother Lee was converted at the early age of fifteen, and was only about sixteen when he began holding religious services. Soon afterwards he was licensed to preach, and for several years in Ireland and Scotland, as a local preacher, he made "full proof of his ministry." His parents died when he was very young, thus leaving him to "face life's great battle," with more than ordinary exposure to temptation; but always and everywhere his mind was pure and his life untainted.

Brother Lee came to West Virginia from the Old World, in the summer of 1872, and served the remainder of that year on the Mannington Circuit. He joined the West Virginia Conference in March, 1873, and has served the following Churches: Kingwood, one year; Fetterman, three years; Grantsville, Maryland, one year; Guyandotte, two years, and Clarksburg, three years. He is in his first year in his present appointment at Buckhannon.

Brother Lee has had liberal educational advantages, and he has used them well. He has read a large number of books, and is at home on almost any topic of conversation which may be introduced.

As a preacher he is logical and eloquent, frequently taking his audience by surprise as by some beautiful flight of oratory he illustrates the Sacred Truth. He is one of those preachers to whom the people are more firmly attached, year by year, and whose preaching never shows any indication of sameness or repetition. He might preach a lifetime in a charge, and always have something new to say. In disposition, he is exceedingly modest and retiring. In temper, calm and self controlling. As a minister, he is true in every department of his holy work, and equally successful. While as a friend, he is steadfast as a rock, and helpful to the utmost of his ability.

In the autumn of 1879, Brother Lee was married to Miss Ida M. Engle, of Grantsville, Maryland, who is to him a faithful and devoted helper in his work as a minister of the M. E. Church. Only those who are personally intimate with the subject of this sketch, and know his sterling worth and ability can fully appreciate the man, and his many sacrifices for the sake of our beloved Methodism in the State of West Virginia.

SERMON XXIV.

BY

REV. JOSEPH LEE.

THEME:—DIVINE AND HUMAN WORK.

TEXT:—"Let thy work appear unto thy servants and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea the work of our hands establish thou it."—Psalm xc: 16, 17.

I. FIRST, DIVINE WORK.

The work of God is made manifest in creation. He called into existence the vast universe and peopled space with innumerable worlds of greatness and grandeur. He laid the foundations of the world and built it up in beauty and strength. He has moved the stars in their solemn march through the heavens, and made them praise him in the music of their spheres. He has "loosed Orion and bound the influences of Pleiades." He wields the lightning, and rules the whirlwind, and chains with unpassable barriers the ocean's proud and restless waves. Thus the work of God is grandly unfolded in the splendor of the skies, the beauties of the earth and the wonders of the great deep.

Then, again, we see the work of God in Providence, by which, in its comprehensive operations, he sustains all his creatures; and by which in its minute operations he especially cares for the interests of his own people. This work of God appeared to Noah and his family in their escape from the great deluge. It

was made known to Lot and his family in their deliverance from the cities of the plain. It was wonderfully made manifest to Moses, in his history and character as the great leader of Israel. It appeared clear to the children of Israel in their emancipation from Egyptian bondage; in their passage across the Red Sea as on dry land; in being fed with Manna from the skies, and refreshed with water from the rock. While they were wandering in the wilderness, they were brought near to the mount, where Moses received the law, amid blackness, and darkness, and thundering, and lightning, and storm; where instructions were also given regarding the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat, the priesthood, the sacrifices, and the varied operations of that dispensation. This work of Divine Providence has been made manifest to the people of God throughout all generations.

But there is another, which is God's greatest and grandest work. It is his work of redemption, by which he saves the sinner from the ruins of the fall; by which he lifts him into his favor and transforms him to his likeness, and by which he qualifies him for the glory and blessedness of heaven. None but God could do this work. It is a work of reconciliation to be accomplished by one, who from the earliest times, was announced as Jehovah, who should undertake and accomplish the salvation of the world. He took our nature into close union with his own—so God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. The death of Jesus Christ was the great and effectual means of man's reconciliation to God. It was a sublime subject for angels to study: it was the grand theme of the Old Testament writers; it was the great subject which was presented on Mount Tabor (or Hermon) when Christ was transfigured; it is set forth in the Lord's Supper, and it is the song of the glorified,—they adore the Lamb that was slain, but is now alive from the dead and is to live forever more.

In this work, we see God graciously willing the recovery of the lost, arranging the whole scheme of redemption, according to his good pleasure which he had purposed in himself; and in the deepest and greatest

tenderness, offering his only begotten Son, being the most costly sacrifice which he could bestow. We also see the Divine Son humiliated, despised and smitten. He enters into the mystery of sorrow, which the human mind fails to conceive. He is obedient in his death, and the humanity which he took upon himself, he loved so well, that he did not leave it to perish in the tomb, but took it with him into the glory of heaven, in order that all other redeemed and saved humanity might not be strange or lonely amid the splendors of that palace eternal in the sky.

Now, God's work of grace and mercy is in constant operation for the personal salvation of man. This divine work produces the sublimest results. It gives light to our understanding, tenderness to the conscience, godly sorrow to the heart, and confidence in God to the self-condemned spirit. It conveys to the heart of those who trust in Jesus, conscious pardon, renews it in righteousness and true holiness, makes it radiant with celestial light, and fruitful of all good works. A new creation is evoked out of the wild waste of man's spiritual nature; mantled with a serene sky, brightened by divine illumination, refreshed by dews of grace and showers of blessing, enriched with the peaceable fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God,—and over the whole is spread an almighty defence so that no foe can conquer and no spoiler destroy. The divine energy of this work is unceasing. It changes us from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. The inward man is renewed day by day; holy principles gather strength; spiritual graces assume richer hues of beauty; piety towards God and benevolence towards man appear in lovelier and more impressive forms, and the good work of God is thus carried on, until it is perfect and complete.

It is also a work of power to those that believe. It sustains and blesses them amid the trials and tribulations of life. Whatever be the nature of our trials or their number, the work of divine grace is a sustaining power. It brings relieving brightness in every obscure day and dark night. It dries up our

tears, and silences our complaints. It solaces us in our sorrows, upholds us in our weakness, and comforts us in our tribulations. It gives us songs in the inner prison, glorying under stripes, and divine heroism when brought to the stake, or cast into the flames. It takes away the sting of death, crowns the departing spirit with victory, and inspires it with hymns of praise to God and the Lamb.

This work of God includes the resurrection of the body to eternal life. The mortal shall put on immortality; the victor shall be vanquished; death shall be swallowed up in victory. Behold the immortal form, as it is fitted and made ready for the ransomed and glorified soul, and the dignity of a higher situation! The Judge of the whole human family appears, and before him all are called to stand. Where now is he who is saved by the work of almighty power and grace? Look at the blaze of glory on the right of the Judge! You find the Savior there; but does not the light and glory dazzle and overwhelm you? We are not surprised that it does Your natural vision is not now prepared to bear the sight; but the Judge sees him. He singles him out, brings him forward to the front, and there he stands in the presence of the great assembly! Every ear is attentive; every eye is fixed. Then the Judge says, "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Behold the crown he wears, the society with which he mingles, the everlasting pleasures he enjoys! He has ears to hear, eyes to see, and an immortal nature to understand the deeper things of the Kingdom of God. He is raised to glisten in the splendors of deity. He enters that home, where the walls of jasper, the gates of pearl, and the streets of gold are surpassed by the glory of God, the presence of Christ and the society of angels. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are intimately nigh; they give of their fulness, and satisfy him to the utmost. Thus in all these things we can see the great work of God in the complete redemption and glorification of the believing soul.

II. HUMAN WORK.

Man being ignorant of the ways of God while in his natural state, he therefore finds it necessary to secure knowledge. We are told that most of our original ideas are acquired through the senses; that nearly all we know is by sense; that we have no innate ideas; and if we had only one which we brought into this world with us, it would be that of the being of our great Creator. The Holy Scriptures tell us that man, not only in the lowest savage state, but by wisdom, knows not God. He comes into the world in a depraved moral state, and he is more stupid than the ox, "which knoweth his owner." And so it is very evident that nothing can be of greater importance than that man should know himself. "Know thyself," was a popular expression among the Greeks; and so highly mentioned among the Romans that it was declared to have decended from heaven. It has always been and is a subject of great interest at the present time. Man should work in order to know himself in regard to his immortal nature, his depraved moral condition, his unrighteous state, his accountableness to God, and his future destiny. To secure this knowledge, he is endowed with the faculties of mind; has been blessed with sufficient means of information, and the most powerful incentives, both from the command of God and the importance of the matter itself. This knowledge, therefore, is at the foundation of moral principle and religious duty. But it is of as great importance that man should know his maker—know him as a God of infinite perfection—what he is to man, as the author of his being, his benefactor, redeemer, his soul's chief good, and his judge who will arrange his destiny in eternity. To know God is the great end of man's being. For this purpose he is made what he is—invested with exalted faculties of mind, surrounded with grand and glorious objects of sense, intrusted with a divine revelation, and favored with the presence of the Holy Spirit, who makes known to the mind and reveals to the soul the unchangeable God. Man, by a right use of these

means, and the exercise of his powers, should obtain this very important knowledge.

There are special divine blessings which should be obtained. Man comes into this world as devoid of spiritual good as he does of knowledge. He is blind, poor, miserable and wretched. As he has sinned, therefore he is told to repent. He has abused the mercies of God, and should therefore be humbled to poverty of spirit. He must obtain the pardon of sin, the favor of God, peace of mind and love to the Lord, joy in God and the evidence of salvation. These are blessings which form the title to, and fitness for glory and eternal life. To secure these blessings there must be active work in asking, seeking and believing, so as to make one's calling and election sure by being adopted into the family of God.

Man has duties to perform. He exists in a sinful world, and is clothed with a fallen and depraved nature. His first duties, therefore, are to resist the temptations of the one, and overcome the evil desires of the other. He has to deny ungodliness and worldly desires; overcome the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. And if in doing these things, a hand or an eye should offend, it should be cut off or plucked out and cast from him. But there are other duties which are, perhaps, more positive in their character. Man is placed in various important relations, as a creature, to the Creator, as a brother to the human family, or as a member of a civil or religious body, and is connected to others by ties of flesh and blood. Each of these relations contains its varied duties. That man may resist that which is evil and cleave unto that which is good, he must strive against every appearance of evil. He must read and study the Divine Word, so that it may direct him by its precepts and encourage him by its sacred promises. He should ask for the blessings of divine favor, in order that they may enable him to do the will of God. Man is sent into this world to be religious, and religion is compared to running, wrestling, laboring, fighting, agonizing, and working out our salvation with fear and trembling.

Man is placed here to bè an active agent; and he is

often found active in the pursuit of those things which please the senses, gratify the appetites, serve his worldly interest, or agree with the nature of his earthly pursuits. But he should be much more active in those things which relate to the well being of the soul, the great concerns of eternity, and the glory of God. He has hands to employ in God's work, and feet to run his errands and move in the paths of obedience. His eyes should be active in surveying the glories of God; his tongue should be used to speak the Master's praises; his judgment should determine the emotions of the soul; his will should choose the good and refuse the evil; and with his affections he should esteem, love, fear, hope, and rejoice in God.

But man has a still higher guide to direct him in his actions and work. He is favored with a dispensation of the Holy Spirit, with a clear revelation of God's will and Word, and a Gospel ministry besides; and he has the promise of an abundant entrance into glory as the reward of faithful service. Man is placed in this world as a candidate for a brighter and a better home; and by good discipline and holy exercise he may be prepared for it, as a scholar in school is trained for future situation and employment. Here, in this life, are the works of sin and the works of righteousness presenting themselves as employments to be chosen. To the works of sin, misery is uniformly attached; and of the works of righteousness true happiness is the result. These are the most potent motives for the pursuit of holiness, and the reward is the glory of a celestial home.

Thus man in the present state has salvation to secure. He has sins to repent of and renounce; bad habits to conquer; wicked passions to control; vile propensities to mortify; wasted time to redeem; pardon for past sins to seek; enemies to subdue; mercies to be grateful for; affections to give to God; duties to discharge to God, to the world, his friends and himself, and purity and fitness to gain for an immortal life. There is then work for every power of man's body, every faculty of mind, every affection of the heart, every talent with which he is entrusted, and for every

moment of precious time. This work is to be done with an eye single to God's glory and with a heart sincere, by laying aside every weight and running with patience the race set before him. Jesus is man's great pattern. He had to work the works of him who sent him, and endure the severest suffering and trial. But though he sweat under it even blood, there was something in it so sweet, that it was more than his meat and drink to do his Father's will. Paul had some of the hardest portions of it, and found in it such a charm that his life was not dear to him, so that he could finish his course with joy. No man, at the time, says it is hard; none on reflection will say that it is unpleasant; none ever repented on a death-bed for having done God's work. But many have been burned at the stake, before they would abandon it. God has given to man time that he may improve it; talents that he may employ them; grace that he may use it; strength that he might exert it; and appointed work that he might do it. So man should use the strength and grace he has, and action will be attended with a growing delight. God will reward the righteous for their works of faith and labor of love. Though Paul's salary for preaching was, at times, persecution, yet he knew that there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness. Even mad Balaam, who loved the work and present wages of unrighteousness, wanted the rewards of piety hereafter. "Say to the righteous it shall be well with them for they shall eat of the fruit of their doings."

This work of man is also a work of personal sanctification. Some might object to such a view of the subject, and say that sanctification is of grace. It is by the blood of Christ we are sanctified. Looking with respect to God, it is altogether of his grace that we are saved. Just as penitence is his gift, just as power to believe springs from the gracious influence of the Spirit of God upon our hearts, so the sanctification of our nature is by the impartation of his Spirit. But looking manward—looking towards our duties, we have a share in this important matter, and it is laid upon us; hence, the exhortations to

sanctification by believing trust in the promises, that we are to cleanse ourselves "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." Thus the standard set before man, is having found the rock on which he is called to build, to place stone upon stone, until at last the same hand that laid the foundations shall complete the edifice, amid shoutings of "grace, grace unto it." It is man's part as a spiritual husbandman in the plot of ground which is assigned to him, to root out the pestilential weeds of sin and impurity, and to cultivate the various fruits of the Christian mind. His hand must grasp the promised blessings. His energies must be put forth day by day, and by his efforts, in association with the Holy Spirit, he is to "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord."

There is also the work of personal service in the Church of Christ. There are many misconceptions as to man's duty in this respect. Some persons seem to think that Christianity consists almost altogether in privilege. They are ready to take the Lord Jesus as a Savior, but they seem to forget him as a Master. Man should never think, however, that he can take the blessing of salvation without, at the same time, putting his shoulder to the burden. But Christ tells him that his burden is light. Man should never think to enjoy the blessings of salvation without, at the same time, subjecting his neck to the yoke, discipline, and service of his Divine Master. There is a personal work for every man to do in the extension of Christ's spiritual kingdom in the world. Look at the teaching of the Apostle Paul in regard to this work. He says, "No man liveth to himself." That is true of all; none can live to themselves. The drunkard and Sabbaih-breaker do hot live unto themselves. Man cannot exert his energies withoutt sending out influences in his thoughts, actions and words, which will, in some way, affect his neighbors and associates or friends.

But what does the Apostle say as to the character of the good man's work? He distinctly declares that the purpose of the Christian is to live unto the Lord.

"Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Look at the connection between the authority of Christ and man's living. "No man liveth to himself;" but the Christian lives and dies in the Lord. It is for this purpose that Christ reigns in heaven; "that he might be Lord both of the dead and living," and that he might gather to himself the effects and consequences of man's moral and spiritual work, so as to use them for his own honor and glory. Our Lord himself, the great Teacher, speaks of the Church as an active agent. When speaking of the Kingdom of God, and speaking of its wide diffusion throughout the world, Christ represents it as leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. It is not the preacher in the pulpit, nor the officials of the Church merely, who are to work to advance the Kingdom of Jesus upon earth; but the whole Church are to act as leaven for the diffusion of his kingdom among the people. It is only by this means that the world will be converted. So man is called to this work of actual, personal service, in connection with the Church. Oh! what a dignity it is to be engaged in rolling darkness from this world and flo oding it with light; exiling misery from this world and filling it with happiness; dethroning Satan from the world and enthroning Christ. If every man who professes to be enlisted under the banner of the Captain of our Salvation, were only to do his duty, there would soon be a triumph in comparison with which the splendors of the tented battlefield would sink into insignificance. If all would work aright, there would soon be the grand chorus of a redeemed and recovered world. "Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!" Each individual should then do his or her part in this great work—the aged, the middle aged, the young, the learned, the unlettered, the rich, the poor, parents and children—all should "Come to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. F. H. J. King was born at Ripley, Jackson county, West Virginia, September 21st, 1834. His ancestors, as far back as he can trace them, were either members of, or sympathizers with, the Methodist Episcopal Church. He joined the M. E. Church, January 1st, 1848, and was converted in March, 1851. He was licensed to preach by Rev. A. J. Lyda, in January, 1857, and was received, on trial, in the West Virginia Conference, March, 1857; was ordained Deacon, April 24th, 1859, by Bishop Thomas A. Morris; was ordained Elder, March 17th, 1861, by Bishop Osman C. Baker.

His first appointment was Phillippi; his second, Pruntytown; third, Buckhannon; fourth, Raleigh; fifth, Fayette and Raleigh. Then the war drove him from his Circuit. From this time till the close of hostilities, he had no regular appointment, but preached anywhere and everywhere a congregation could be gathered.

Brother King, with most of the preachers of the Conference, suffered greatly during the entire rebellion. Immediately after the war, and for his sixth appointment, he traveled Petroleum Circuit one year and a half, when his eye sight failing, he took a supernumerary relation for a year and a half. His next, and seventh appointment was Raleigh Circuit, two years; the eighth, was Murraysville, two years; ninth, Middlebourne, three years; tenth, Nicholas, three years; eleventh, Fayette, one year; twelfth, the New River District. He was the first Presiding Elder this District ever had, as it was not established until 1880, and he is now serving his last year upon it.

Brother King was brought up on a farm, and necessarily had but few educational advantages in early life. In writing to me on this subject, he used the following language: "I was a farmer, and had very poor opportunities for education. The most of my information was obtained by the light of 'pine knots,' or 'tallow dips,' on the kitchen hearth, or, in front of the old-time log fire; or while plowing, hoeing, or reaping in the fields. I often left an open book on the fence, at the end of the furrow, to be read and studied while turning the horses, or while resting." This was a severe method of cultivating the brain; but it was a sure way. Only the few, however, have the pluck, or ambition, to persevere in such a school. As remarked in other preceding Sketches, many of our most prominent preachers

educated themselves very much the same way followed up by Brother King.

The subject of this sketch, though not a scholar in a classic sense, yet, he is well up in theology, and is the possessor of a good English style. His sermons are clear, strong, carefully prepared, and convincing. He has a powerful voice,—no audience has yet been found too large for him to fail to make himself heard by all present. By his impassioned delivery, occasioned by efforts before large congregations in the open air, Brother King has earned for himself the patronymic, "King of thunder;" and in no objectionable sense is he often thus addressed. He has been the instrument in the Lord's hands of saving many souls in his various fields of labor; and as he is now in the prime of life, there is yet before him, we trust, many more years of usefulness to the Church.

January 20, 1861, Brother King and Miss Rufina Elizabeth Wilson were united in marriage. One of their sons—W. Wirt King—is a minister in the West Virginia Conference.

SERMON XXV.

BY

REV. F. H. J. KING, P.E.

THEME:—MORAL DESPONDENCY—ITS CAUSES AND ITS CURE.

TEXT:—"Why art thou cast down, O, my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God."—PSALMS xlii: 5.

David's writings are full of sighs. We see him leaning upon his harp and sighing, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest." We see him again as he beholds the sanctuary desolated by the workings of wicked men, crying, "O God, why hast thou cast us off forever?" We hear him again, when an exile from his nativity, crying in language of intense longing, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God?" We view him again as he mourns over the defeat and disaster of Israel, and hear him sigh in all the distress of utter helplessness, "O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased: O turn thyself to us again." And again we see him in the hands of his enemies, oppressed by the impious, perfidious, wicked and deceitful Babylonians, under the government of the unjust and arbitrary Nebuchadnezzar, crying, "O my God my soul is cast down within me."

But, as if alarmed at the weakness of his faith, and, fearing, lest his soul should turn traitor to him, in whom he had trusted, and as if recognizing the impropriety and unjustness of mourning over discour-

agements, with which he had already struggled and conquered, and over calamities which were still threatening him, he rebukes his soul for its doubt and skepticism in the power of God, and in a comfortable apostrophe encourages it not to relinquish its trust and confidence for a threefold reason: First, that being righteous, God would be his judge; second, that being merciful, God would plead his cause; third, that being almighty, God would deliver him. He inquires of his soul, "Why art thou cast down? why art thou disquieted in me? and then with holy firmness and Christian devotion, commands it. "Hope thou in God."

My dear brethren, we find that David is not the only man who has succumbed to the influence of opposition. Not the only man whose soul has been daunted by discouragements. Not the only man whose faith has been weakened by shadow and darkness, and by the test o fadverse circumstances. Not the only man whose heart has been burdened with anguish, and whose soul has been borne down by the infirmities of his nature. We see the indomitable heart of Paul bowed down, and hear him longing "to depart and be with Christ." We hear the oriental monarch, amidst all the emoluments and luxuries, and acquirements of the world, sigh, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." We hear Isaiah say, "I did mourn as a dove," and then sigh, "O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." We hear Jesus himself, amidst the physical pain and agony of the expiring hour, sigh a sigh that made the earth and the heavens tremble, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me." And from the millions of God's children throughout the world, arises the sigh freighted with all the melancholy of certain anguish, "Is life worth living?"

By a close and critical examination, we find that that this moral despondency, which has entered so largely into the Christian experience of all ages, and no less into the religious trial and conflicts of the present, has its basis in the influence of external circumstances on the internal moral sense. These present themselves in forms innumerable as the sands of the sea shore, and in degrees of potency proportion-

ate to their number. The Christian's character is thus laid open at every point to the possibilities of an immediate attack from the internal moral sense, affected by the force of external circumstances; and hence the necessity of fortifying our characters against the assaults of our own natures. Eternal vigilance is not the price of liberty only, but the price of Christian safety, also.

It is our province to endeavor to examine more closely the causes of spiritual depression. And we remark:

I. MORAL DESPONDENCY IS OFTEN OCCASIONED BY INDIVIDUAL AFFLICTION.

The more we investigate the motives which incite men to Christian activity, that prompt them to labor, the more we are convinced that these motives are too frequently imbedded in selfish desires and unchristian ambition. The closer we analyze the secret impulse to action, the more certainly do we discover marks of insincerity. And when we place the actions of men, as well as the desire that prompts to the action, into the crucible of Christian inspection and scrutiny, we are frequently startled by the revelation that selfishness and depraved aspirations form the substratum upon which we erect our most conspicuous tabernacle of good works.

Hence comes moral despondency in time of affliction, when excruciating bodily pain and physical weakness confines us to the sick chamber. Borne along on a full tide of prosperity during health; with surrounding circumstances propitious; playing the virtuous part on the public theatre amid the huzzas of the multitude; we are prone to incline toward the vice of the accused Pharisee—to lose sight of the great end for which we labor, by unintentionally yet unquestionably drifting away in obedience to the suggestions of a corrupt ambition. And when we are brought to perform the virtuous drama in the shade we become dejected. An unaccountable reaction takes place. It is easy to emulate even the loftiest conceivable type of Christian manhood when such emulation is attended

with present remuneration. Comparatively easy to exhibit moral heroism when everybody's hat is in mid air at the deed; but to retire from public gaze and with devoted earnestness and manly intrepidity exhibit the same ardor with no encouragement but the secret consciousness of having done right, "aye, there's the rub." If you were to be stricken down this moment with some bodily infirmity that would completely disable you through life, and you were never again permitted to set foot out of doors, then do your duty sitting in your arm chair or lying on your bed. Exert that gentle Christian influence, cultivate that Christian patience and resignation, exhibit that certain comfort and help and peace that God bequeaths to you as his children, and through affliction perfect the Christian graces in your heart, and little do you know the good you may accomplish even in the valley and the shadow, which will tell, God only knows what, eternal ages. A work which even a human eye may read a thousand ages hence. Despond not; ever hope in God. He gave you just those circumstances and that location, and those opportunities, and he only requires you under those circumstances to do all you can.

II. A SECOND OCCASION FOR MORAL DESPONDENCY IS FOUND IN WORLDLY OPPOSITION.

In the third verse of this Psalm, the Psalmist mourns and says, "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?" The Israelites were in captivity and the Babylonians, their captors, while holding them in complete subjugation, mocked their faith in a Divine power, and chafed them with the interrogation, Where, now, is thy God? The same spirit is still abroad in the world. We cannot confess that it is the same now in its manifestations and potency that it once was. We cannot acknowledge that eighteen hundred years of Christian ministry and its accompanying benign influence, has done nothing towards revolutionizing public sentiment, and modifying the vulnerable and unbelieving criterion of the

world. Far be it from this. But we do say that virtually the same spirit exists in an ameliorated form in the world to-day. The same spirit presumptuously and boldly manifests itself in our own age, and even in our own Christian land, however much may be said of progress, of civilization, of culture and of religious superiority. The same skeptical interrogatory with which the unbelieving Babylonians irritated the Israelites is still thrust into the face of the believer, from some pulpits, from many rostrums, and from many more journals. It is a sorrowful fact, a fact too comfortless to be reiterated; that even some of the clergy in our orthodox denominations have so far forgotten their high and noble calling as to hang out the flag of truce on the approach of certain forms of infidel doctrines.

In vindication of which assertion, I need only refer you to the published sentiments of such men as Doctors Beecher, Cook, and McCosh on the subject of evolution. Each attaching his signature to the philosophical technicalities of the other, and all uniting to substantiate the unscrupulous teachings of the six great English and German scientists. Endeavoring to effect a compromise between the inner teachings of this blessed book and modern so called science. True science and revelation do agree, and all philosophy is but the crystalized gems of the word of eternal truth.

"Religion and revelation have found friends in the friends of scienc
And true prayer has flowed from lips wet with Castalian dews."

But these commotions and contentions and compromises, cause spirits of doubt to rise in your hearts, and we frequently find ourselves revolving the question, "May I not be wrong? May not the Bible be a cunningly devised fable?" and we are led to despond. Such epochs as this are found in every man's history. They are the darkest hours we ever experience. These considerations and doubts constitute what in the terse strong language of the great Roman historian is called the "crises of the soul." Allowing such considerations as these to find an entrance into the heart, will cast a shadow over the brightest experience, and is a treason, which, if not immediately expiated will inevitably seal your damnation.

Drive back such ideas. Advertently shrink from

entertaining such thoughts. Let the world scoff and oppose. Let atheists and moralists and materialists and sceptics pour forth their maledictions against your faith and your religion. Let combinations of wicked men who have set themselves against Christianity as a Divine scheme, hurl their futile resources of anathema at your religion and your Bible. It may seem dark and doubtful; but I tell you my friend, it is infinitely darker without hope and without God in the world. "Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him." Here is the remedy. This is the panacea offered by the Great Physician. It is the philosopher's stone—the true secret. "Hope thou in God."

III. A THIRD OCCASION FOR MORAL DESPONDENCY MAY ARISE FROM A SEEMING COLDNESS AND DESOLATION IN THE CHURCH.

In the verse preceding our text, David says, "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holiday." Now this was no more. All was mourning in Zion, and desolation in his captivity. This it was that operated on the heart of David, causing him to despair and go mourning.

In no department of Christian activity do we want to stand alone, and from no one thing do we receive so much encouragement as from the consideration that at our right hand and left there are others who are fighting, working, who will undergo danger and contest the field with us. It sweetens all of our battle-fields if we know we have comrades who will aid us. We love association. We love the sound of the friendly voice, and the pressure of the friendly hand, and the communion of the friendly heart. We love sym-

pathy, and nothing more nerves us to heroic endurance—to indefatigable, uncompromising, unwavering Christian activity—than the sympathetic co-operation of others—than to hear the sound of the friendly voice and the familiar tramp of the comrade by our side. You know, every one of you knows the omnipotence of social influence. Tell the warrior who goes forth to battle, that he must face the enemy alone, and he goes reluctantly. But tell him to repair to the muster ground and there he will find a regiment of comrades, and his patriotic heart is enthused and he goes willingly.

The same course of reasoning holds good with regard to the Church. The Church which was once crowded with an anxious audience is now almost deserted. The Church which once resounded with hallelujahs and praise to God, seems to have well nigh lost its vital godliness. Schisms and dissensions have arisen. The sheep have strayed away from the sheep fold without a shepherd. The once manifestly emotional and deeply spiritual service has evolved into a rigid formal service, and the members are all clothed in the stiff robes of Pharaseeism. Oh, how your hearts despond and you think there is no use trying any longer. "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." This hard path you are traveling may be the safest one for your feet. God works in mysterious ways. He has thousands of ways by which he makes the transactions of this word conducive to the interests of his Church. It may look hard and dark and unfruitful now; but know this, in a future waiting, beyond the reach of present uncertainties, these mysteries will all be explained. The prophetic day whose labor is to demonstrate unsolved problems and whose penetrating scrutiny will remove the impervious incrustations from all mysteries, will exhibit to you these misty spots of your experience in the luminous light of truth.

And now, in conclusion, let me urge you, never despond. As you start out on the boisterous sea of life, navigating a track untraveled by any of your ancestors, but to be criticised by all your posterity, let me

urge you to start out with hearts sustained, ennobled, strengthened, secured, by an indomitable trust in God. I am aware that it is a hard thing for a man to be a devout, holy, consecrated Christian. It requires a vast deal of moral stamina of genuine courage. O, it requires courage and manly heroism to stand by the truth! To stand by it when it is unpopular, and unprofitable. I tell you it takes grace and developed Christian manhood, to prosecute a successful and unremitting warefare against the incoming tide of prevalent vices. But proudly raise yourselves. Go forth boldly to do and dare. Begin this warfare with the first enemy. Stretch forth your hand and shout "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," and in the name of God you shall prevail. You will have disparagements; but ah, my brethern, let us never succumb to the creeping paralysis of despair. Many a saint has felt as overwhelmingly as did David, or Moses, or Job. But from the lives of all Christ's saints—nay, from the Cross of Christ—nay, from heaven itself, like the captain's shout which reinspires the wavering battle, the voice comes to us Courage! This voice may not come to us in the stentorian tones of Sinai. It may come noiselessly, almost imperceptibly. It may come like the tender melody of a half forgotten song. It may come like a ripple of light from a distant star. It may come like a tremulous cadence from a far off shore. No difference how it comes, the voice will come to us Courage! and so rekindle the "faith which can alone sweeten and brighten life." Courage! You will have trials. The prophets were persecuted. The apostles fought with men as with wild beasts. Your Divine Redeemer was tempted, yet without sin.

Dream not of rest and freedom. I tell you, you will have discouragements and conflicts, and heartbreaks. It is a part of the Divine plan that you should suffer and be strong, and then quit like men. There never will be a day that you will not feel a sadness of heart. There is no escape from it. These pains and heartaches are graven on the hearts of millions, with a burning stylus, and you never will be free from them till you get within the gates of your Father's house

and join in the chorus "unto him who hath loved us and washed us in his blood."

The past may have been dark and the future may be Cimmerian. The past may have been battle and the future may now be full of gloom and apprehension. But hope in God. In all your past experience you have never had an hour so dark but if you looked above you, you could see the hand of God and the bow of "peace and promise." In all your past battles you have never perished, nor have you ever known of the weakest one being conquered if calmly hoping and firmly trusting in God. How could they be conquered? I tell you 'twere an easier thing to move the everlasting granite of the hills than to move that man or woman who has his feet firmly planted on "the Rock of Ages." How could they be conquered? Christianity knows no defeat. The path of Christianity is strewn with victorious trophies, and her battle fields are covered with the fragments of her slain. And standing on this lofty eminence of Christian aggression, with the twilight of the twentieth century already flooding the fading campfires of the nineteenth, I bless God I can look down the long dark avenues of the past and say, Christianity always has conquered; and turning my gaze adown the misty future, I bless God I can triumphantly say, she always will conquer. O I see her stepping over toppling thrones and crumbling dynasties, with the diadem of universal empire on her brow and the scepter of undisputed royalty in her hand, and with the glory of youth in her countenance, driving her enemies before her like chaff before the whirlwind; and ever and anon amid the din of the battle, I can hear the clear ringing tones of her Great Commander shouting "All Hail! be not afraid." Thus she is going on to eternal victory. No earthly power can hinder her in her onward course; for "one shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight."

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. James B. Fitzpatrick, now stationed at Zane Street M. E. Church, Wheeling, is a native of Rockbridge county, Virginia. On the 26th day of November last, he rounded up a half century of life. His father belonged to an old Irish family, and was born and reared in Ireland. He came to this country when a young man married a Virginia lady, and spent the remainder of his life in that noted Commonwealth.

The subject of this sketch was educated in Virginia Schools; and in November, 1855, when twenty-three years of age, he entered the ministry of the M. E. Church, South, in the Virginia Conference. He remained in this Conference up to, and during the war, although a portion of the time he was in the army, and was in some of the hottest battles fought during that great struggle. After hostilities closed, and when the Virginia Conference territory north of the Rappahannock was transferred to the Baltimore Conference, Brother Fitzpatrick fell into the Baltimore connection; and at once took high rank as a preacher.

In 1872, at the close of his second year in Harrisonburg, he was compelled to move South on account of enfeebled health. He was accordingly transferred to the Florida Conference, and was stationed at Tallahassee and Jacksonville, serving three years in each of these cities. His health was entirely restored by the balmy air of the Southland, and receiving a call to St. James Church, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, he went thither, and remained one year. Finding the climate undesirable, he returned to Kentucky, and came from there to the West Virginia Conference, M. E. Church, and was stationed at Zane Street, Wheeling, in October 1872.

Brother Fitzpatrick is no ordinary preacher. He is a man of unquestioned ability. He has a rich and vivid imagination; is deliberate and methodical in speech, and never fails to command the attention of his hearers. The impassioned portions of his sermons are intensely dramatic; and he has just enough of the Celt in his make-up, to enable him at times, by his shining wit, and grotesque personations, to occasion a complete captivation of his audience.

As Brother Fitzpatrick has only recently come among us, I give below a few paragraphs from different newspapers in towns and cities where he has been stationed:

The Harrisonburg (Va.) *Commonwealth*, speaking of Brother F.'s lecture on "Lot's Wife," says: "The lecture was intensely

entertaining and impressive. Mr. Fitzpatrick is one of the ablest pulpit orators of the Baltimore Conference."

The Shepherdstown (W. Va.) *Register*, speaking of Brother F.'s transfer from that place to Harrisonburg, Virginia, remarks: "He is an able and forcible speaker—none more so in the Baltimore Conference; and while this community feels loth to part with him, we congratulate the people of Harrisonburg upon receiving so eloquent, faithful and earnest a minister of the Gospel."

The Jacksonville (Fla.) *Union*, alluding to Brother F.'s transfer to Hamilton, Ontario, compliments him in the following language: "The many friends of Rev. Mr. Fitzpatrick, while rejoicing at his prosperity, will regret to hear that he has accepted a position that removes him from this city, where he is so well and favorably known, and where it was hoped he would remain long and build up the cause he had espoused. We wish our friend every success in his new field; and knowing him as we do, we have little doubt that he will soon become as popular in Canada as he is in Florida."

The Church wherein he now ministers is well filled every Sabbath with anxious auditors. With such a pastor, I take it, no Church will be afflicted with lethargy; but on the contrary, it will always be awake, alive, and abreast of the times.

SERMON XXVI.

BY

REV. JAMES B. FITZPATRICK.

THEME:—WILL IT PAY.

TEXT:—"Godliness is profitable unto all things."—I TIMOTHY iv: 8.

It is Morning: we take our stand upon the top of that mountain just there;* we turn our faces to the East. The sun has just driven his chariot through the gates of the Orient, and with his golden sceptre chased the night away. In the distance we see the beautiful Ohio winding its way like a thread of silver, amid a woof of beautiful emerald; here and there a boat proudly rides upon the sparkling water. There, just in front of us, lies farm against farm. The plowman turns the sod. The dairyman drives forth his wagon. The children are moving happily away to school. 'Tis a beautiful picture: all is life, energy, enterprise. We will now turn our faces westward. The city is almost at our feet; black clouds are lifting up there sooty heads from a hundred "smoke stacks," and spreading out into one great heavy cloud, covering and hiding from our view, Church and State House. Here and there, fire leaps like lurid lightning from this dark valley; and from beneath it all we hear the deep toned roll, as of far off thunder. What means all this? We will descend and see.

*Wheeling hill.

We are now in the streets; an hundred furnaces in full blast. Vulcan swings the sledge; the throb of the great engine's heart is heard on every hand. That thunder is the roll of commerce. Cars are arriving and departing. Clerks and salesmen, all are rushing hither and thither. The lawyer urges his case before the judge. The banker is busy at his counter. All is energy, push and noise. What does all this mean? Surely the people are not all crazy. Surely this is not a great lunatic asylum we have gotten into? No, they are not crazy, they are simply trying to settle the question, "Will it pay?" and settle it affirmatively. They are all after money, and I don't blame them for that. Money is a good thing and has many uses. It secures ease, brings you comfort, enables a man to breathe the pure mountain air, drink mineral waters, and bathe in the sea. With it people can purchase fine houses and elegant furniture, costly silks and beautiful flowers, and feathers and jewels, and make themselves look pretty, when without it they would be as ugly as sin. In fact, it often makes a man somebody, when without it he would be nobody at all. On the other hand it enables people to build churches, and parsonages; send the Gospel to the heathen; bring joy to the heart of the widow, and dry the orphan's tears; and cause the flowers to spring up along the path of the poor.

It will pay! The avocations of the world pay. Men make them pay. Now, will religion pay? This question may startle you, but it is not sacrilege to ask it. We have a right to ask this question. We are willing to submit Christianity to this test. If it will not pay, then let it go. Away with it!

1. Will it pay the country and the world? Go to India; grand country; beautiful mountains; lovely vales; and grand rivers; sweep on through the post Vedic and Vedic periods, until you find the fully developed Brahman, with his lofty countenance and stately stepping, ruling the land; while a subtle Pantheism roots itself every where in the soil of Hindoo thought. Where are her railroads, telegraph lines, institutions of learning? Where her commerce and

civilization? They are not. Christianity has not yet poured her bountiful beauty upon that land Buddha leaped from the Jungles of Uruvela and cried in the ears of all men, "Cease from sin, get virtue, cleanse the heart; this is the doctrine of Buddha." Still, this did not yield the revenue for which the heart yearned, and the nature struggled. O, lift up the Cross in that beautiful land, and then I am sure a voice will ere long come back, "It will pay."

Look out over Egypt—grand old Egypt. The cradle of all the civilizations; the birth place of history, with the channels of thought poisoned by the teachings of the Prophet of Mecca. Grand old countries prostrate beneath the foot of the Turk. A moral sirocco has swept over the land. Only here and there a blossom blooms.

Sweep on around the globe, Behold the oldest empire of the world, China! Old moss-grown China; with its four hundred millions of souls. Her foundations were laid before Alexander had fought a battle; before Plato saw the light; before Romulus had founded the walls of the western empire. Old stubborn China! The Brahmin, the Budddhist, the Parsee, and Confucius have all tried to lift her into the sunlight of a better civilization. Still, she is carrying coal to her cites on horseback; and until five years ago, she was locked up in darkness, having no other promise after death than an eternal sleep, or at best the heavenly Nervana.

But we will turn away from this dark picture. Now, look at those countries blessed with the presence and power of our holy Christianity. What has she done for them? She has cut down the forests; plowed up the prairies; cut through the mountains; built up cities and towns; erected churches, school houses and hospitals; mines have been laid open, and the treasures of the mountains have been poured into the coffers of the nations. She has elevated the morals; enlarged the charities; quelled animosities; polished society everywhere she has gone. A message to Europe is only the work of an hour. A trip across an ocean, or a continent, is but the pastime of a week. Christianity lifts

up the mind of a people to a higher plane, "and strengthens the intellect for discovery." Science walks safely only when she places her hand in the hand of Christianity. Guardian of the country—no ship of state has ever sunk while she was on board. Let her fair hand be on the wheel, and the stormking may fling his lightnings and hurl his bolts crashing through the billows, as they leap to smite the clouds. The deep toned thunders may crash from shore to shore, still she will outride the storm. The clouds will melt away, the air will be filled with sweet music, and redolent of the odor of sweet spices, wafted from the land of promise. Will religion pay the nations? Let them answer, and if they "forget not the hole of the pit whence they are digged," the evidence will come up in thunder tones, corroborating the statement of the Apostle, "Godliness is profitable unto all things."

I say here this evening, that it is my honest belief, that the American people are more deeply indebted to our holy Christianity, and to her faithful ministers, for everything that is necessary to the true happiness and prosperity of a people, than to all the statesmen, and all the warriors the country has ever produced; and the sooner this truth is learned and properly appreciated, the better it will be for the whole country. Oh, ye nations of the earth, come and shake hands around the Cross. Embrace each other at the Open Sepulchre. Come, and here on the anvil of eternal truth, "beat your swords into plowshares and your spears into pruning hooks, and let the people learn that it is not politics, but godliness alone that can bring together and cement in the bonds of brotherhood, all the sections of our country, and enable us to send back its history to be filed with the folios of eternity, as well as to be read by all the ages, proclaiming from this grand national standpoint that "godliness is profitable unto all things."

2. Let us carry this text into the realm of personal or individual experience. We will take it to the battle field. The contest has begun. The skirmishers have been withdrawn. The struggle has commenced. They go in by regiments. I hear the roll of the mus-

ketry! Now, the brigades pass forward! The artillery now begins to thunder forth shot and shell! The noble fellows are falling on every hand! Now, behold! An army corps pivoting on the enemy's centre swings toward our right. We are ready. They meet! they meet!! The shock is like that of an earthquake! Crash! crash! crash! crash! The worst has come. Charge bayonets! rings out along the line. There is where that noble boy fell. The work is done. The dreadful bloody work. Night comes on. The moon coldly looks down on the scene. There lies a splendid boy. He was his mother's darling. He is dying. Stoop and listen! He has a message for you. What is it? "Tell mother to meet me in Heaven." Oh, sirs, what is religion worth to the dying soldier? Or, what is it now worth to that mother, whose heart went to the grave with her boy? Go pile your gold at her feet. Purchase her hopes if you can. No, no; Crœsus never was rich enough for that.

But the campfires are again kindled. The Chaplain asks the Colonel to have the men called together, and he will pray with them. Presently that long roll is sounded. A hymn is sung, and we are about to kneel in prayer. The General appears and is called on to pray; and oh! such a prayer. How tender; how loving; how he pleads for the mother of that boy. How he lifts, on the arms of his faith, the widow and children of that burly soldier, who was shot dead upon the field, and how urgent he interceded for the noble fellowswho are wounded and still live. All are in tears; think you those boys would not die for such a man? Will they ever refuse to obey a command from his lips. No; never. They will cover him all over with glory, or die on the next field in his defense. As a soldier and officer his religion is worth more to him than his salary. It is without price.

Take it into the storehouse. There it makes a man honest. His weights and measures are fully up to the standard. His yardstick measures thirty-six inches every time. He never sells sheepskin gloves, declaring that they are kid, or paper soled shoes for leather. What he says is the truth. People find this out and

they trust his judgment, and bestow upon him their patronage. Nothing pays him so well. It is his best investment. While the godless cheat, whose mouth is filled with falsehood, whose thumb slips on the yard-stick an inch to his own advantage every time—such a fellow may prosper for a while, but ultimately his sins will find him out and crush him, if not in this life, most surely in the life to come.

Take it into the family, and the members of that household are clad in the beautiful robes of a spotless virtue. There you will find the most affectionate parents, the most dutiful and loving children. That husband loves his wife, and thinks she is good enough to be the Queen of England; and that wife looks with pride upon her husband, and esteems him as the noblest of all men. He may be an humble hard working man. He may come every evening from the blazing mouth of one of our furnaces, with his hard, bony hands, and sooty garments. No matter; he is one of God's noblemen, and she knows it. Or he may come from one of those coal mines across the way there, with his face as black as the face of Ham, and his little lamp fastened to the front of his cap. (God bless him, I have great respect for the coal digger. I am more deeply indebted to him than I am to the President of the United States. We can't do without the miner). His light has been shining all day in that dark cavron. Now he goes to shed a purer light on his little home circle. His best investment is his faith in Christ.

There is a man just along side of him. He enters his hovel with horrid oaths upon his lips. His children hide from him. His wife trembles at the footfall of the brute! Whose influence is that man under? Whose teaching does he follow? Not the teaching of our God. No, no. The god of bottles has charge of him, Ah! my brother, the wages of sin is death.

Take it into the home of the rich. Christianity is the rich man's best safeguard. He walks through his splendid halls. The finest carpets yield softly beneath his tread. The walls are adorned with the work of the best artists. His library is filled, alcove above

alcove, with the best of books. His table is well supplied with the delicacies of a Continent. But he realizes that his noblest mansion is that "house whose maker and builder is God." When he goes to his table he first implores food for the soul. The most loved and beautiful picture on the wall, is the picture of Jesus paying the sinner's penalty; and the most highly prized and carefully read book in that library, is the Word of God. In such a man the widow and orphan find a true friend; the Church an earnest helper; the school a staunch supporter; the country a true patriot and defender. Oh! that we had more of them. Every one loves such men, and God loves them, too.

There is another alongside of him. He is a manufacturer. Perhaps he runs a nail factory. He has a godless heart within. He looks upon that hard working man simply as a machine, out of whose labor he can get so much money. If he could get his nail feeder to work for two cents a hundred, he would doubtless do it, and grind the poor fellow's wife and children into perpetual poverty. He has no use for Churches. He would give nothing to schools, if he were not forced to do it by law. His nail feeder gives more to the poor than he does. In fact, he has no use for the poor, if they are not his slaves, serving him under the keen lash of necessity. No wonder they despise him. No wonder they feel like taking vengeance on him. O, how much better for him and them if he would follow the example of his neighbor, and invest somewhat in that grandest and best of all conservators, Christianity. This he would find far better than his hundreds of thousands in gold.

Bring Christianity into the house of mourning. Put it to the test there. The doctor has done all he could. The husband and father is dead. A cloud as black as a triple midnight, has fallen upon those hearts. The arm upon which that woman leaned is cold and rigid in death. The heart that loved so tenderly, the mind that planned so incessantly, all, all now lie a heap of ruins. Hopes are blasted. Expectations are disappointed. Hearts are broken. Are

they? No, sir,—not broken. That was a good man. He leaped from gloom to glory, with the shout of victory ringing from those cold lips. That shout rent the cloud, as it descended and the widowed heart leaped after the ascending spirit and cast its anchor within the vail. Angels came down to whisper words of comfort. Hope spans the grave with the bow of promise. Heaven is more attractive, because the loved and gone is there. Go ask that bruised, but not broken reed, what religion is worth. Open the mountains of California and bring forth their treasures. Purchase if you can, that woman's hope of the future. That heavy blow, tempered with Christianity, was but the prophesy of the coming glory. Price it if you can! Gold crumbles away to dust. Jewels lose their brilliancy. All sources of profit blush to shame in the presence of this. Here "Godliness alone is profitable," for it alone brings the benediction of God.

But the best is yet to come. We must lay aside this cumbrous body. Now we are free. We will mount the chariot of eternal truth. An angel leads the way. We drive on up the jeweled pathway—on and on—up, up and away past the sun, moon and stars. The Golden Gate stands open. We enter the City of God. Behold its streets of gold! Its walls of jasper! Its sunny domes and stary pinnacles! The River of Life! The plains of bliss! See those crowns! Glorious crowns! more brilliant than the sun. Those palms, whose greenness the cycles never fade. There is Abel the first martyr, Abraham, and the patriarchs prophets and apostles. Above all there is the Lamb immaculate—Jesus the Lord. There are our fathers and mothers—our children There they come, clothed with eternal youth and unchanging beauty. Music from heaven's grand orchestra, rolls and revreberates and charms and melts away in the distance. Here is life! life! No hearse ever passed these streets. No orphans cry was ever heard in that happy country. No widow ever wept. There is your child, my brother; you thought he was lost in the wilds of the West; but there he is; long parted friends meet to embrace and

love forever. No death there. The lines of our life run parallel with the lines of God's existence, and are alike interminable. Our lamp has been "lit by the divine radiance, and burning so near the source that feeds, it shall never be extinguished." Roll on the cycles! and still we live, we live and love. Let the grand old arches of the universe decay, and breaking crash, and tumble into ruins! Let Destiny's clock, high up on heaven's highest dome, that pealed forth in joyous stroke, when the world was born, now sound its doom. While the angel of destruction, commissioned by Almighty God, drives forth his chariot, and beneath his thunderous tread grinds a thousand worlds to powder, and flings ten thousand into chaos, wild, and still we live and love and sing on. Roll on the cycles, but the eye grows not dim, the limbs tremble not, the locks proclaim not age.

Will religion pay? I listen to the millions on millions, who have died for it here, and millions who have had but little else int his world, and they answer back from that blest world, and answering like the "sound of many waters," they declare that "Godliness is profitable unto all things." Oh, sirs, seek this, the boon above price! Without it you will be the sport of temptation; without it, life will be a hard struggle at best, death the victor, and the soul, at last, sink beneath eternal gloom. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" and you may —you will ere long join the blood-washed throng, and throughout eternity leave your testimony to the truthfulness of this text, "Godliness is profitable unto all thing, having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come."

PERSONAL SKETCH.

Rev. Joseph Edmund Smith was born of Christian parents in Queen Anne's county, Maryland, the very centre of the classic soil of American Methodism. He was early and thoroughly drilled in the great truths of the Gospel, and shortly after attaining his sixteenth year he became a Christian, and united with the M. E. Church. Possessed of an inquiring mind, he has ever been an eager student. His early advantages were not great, but his mastery of the fundamentals of an education was thorough, and enabled him to pursue his studies with advantage. He is and has been, through his entire life, a tireless student. He has intermeddled with almost all knowledge. The sciences are his especial delight. The conviction that he was to enter the ministry grew upon him after his conversion, and though it clashed with other cherished plans of life, he yielded to the Spirit's summons, and in the spring of 1857, joined the Philadelphia Conference, on trial. His career as a preacher has been, in some respects, remarkable. Success has crowned his efforts on every field.

In the spring of 1861 he was on a large Circuit in Delaware. The breaking out of the war caused, there, as elsewhere, great excitement. Delaware sympathized with the rebellion. Dr. Smith had been but four years in the ministry, and was surrouded by a people who, in all political matters were completely under the control of party leaders, but he did not hesitate a moment. He was the first man in the State to preach upon the duties of the citizen to his country. The leaders of the opposition threatened his life, but he boldly thundered his convictions from nearly every pulpit of his circuit and then printed, and scattered his sermon through the entire community.

Afterward a number of his friends urged him to allow the use of his name as a candidate for Congress. Under the circumstances he would probably have been elected, but he refused to turn aside from his chosen work. He is a thorough Methodist. Other Churches have sought his services in vain. Just before his coming to Wheeling, he was asked to become the pastor of a city church of another denomination at a salary of $5,000 per year. He of course refused.

In the spring of 1865 he was stationed in Fifth Street Church, Philadelphia. Since then he has served the following Churches: Twelfth Street, Philadelphia; Lancaster, Pa.; Grace Church

Wilmington, Del.; First Church, Wilkesbarre, Pa.; First Church, Scranton, Pa.; and in October last he was transferred to this Conference and stationed at Fourth Street Church, Wheeling.

At each of these Churches he remained the full term of three years, except Scranton, which, at the earnest solicitation of the people of Fourth Street, he left in the middle of his third year.

Dr. Smith ranks among the best pulpit orators in Methodism. Simplicity is among the most marked features in his sermons. He is always clear in the analysis of his subjects; and yet, his logic is not of that severe order, which, with so many of our ministers, swallows up the interest of the discourse. He is, therefore, logical and interesting, as well. He is eloquent; and at the same time his eloquence is native to the soul—not assumed after any exterior fashion, for the mere production of artificial effect, which is so common in this age, but is real, feeling, persuading.

Another of the attractive features of Dr. Smith's preaching is his power of illustration. I mean no disrespect when I say that he is a beautiful word-painter. His illustrations are mainly drawn from the great storehouse of Nature. In her school he has studied profoundly; and rich were the revelations his teacher made concerning the ways of obtaining access to the minds and hearts of his hearers.

His literary taste is exquisite. He possesses, to a very great extent, a quick and accurate sense of the beautiful. He is, therefore, poetical in his nature; and being both gentle and humble, his productions, which are always models of pure English, impress themselves delightfully upon the mind, and feelingly upon the heart.

The Doctor is an extemporaneous preacher. He uses neither manuscript nor notes. Still, his sermons are anything but unpremeditated effusions. I have not known him long, but my acquaintance, thus far, justifies me in asserting, that his preparations for the pulpit evince the full consecration of all the powers of his mind, and the best use of all the resources of knowledge within his reach. He writes his sermons before delivering them; and though always rich in thought and logical in their arrangement, the verbiage, purposely, it would seem, is left for the moment of delivery. He is popular—always has large congregations, and is thoroughly devoted to his high calling.

In June 1877, Dickinson College honored him with the degree of Master of Arts, and at the same time Franklin and Marshall College conferred upon him the degree of Doctor in Divinity.

The Northern *Christian Advocate*, to which Dr. Smith has been a regular contributor for years, said, in speaking of the Doctor's transfer from Scranton to Wheeling, "In the transfer of Dr. Smith, Wheeling gains what Scranton loses, one of the most literary men of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

SERMON XXVII.

BY

REV. JOSEPH E. SMITH, D.D.

THEME:—THE ATTRACTION OF THE CROSS.

TEXT:—And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.—JOHN xii: 32.

Attraction is the great law of the universe. It is subject to no change, knows no variation, admits of no exception. Its subtle power fathoms all distances and is felt across all space. It controls all objects, whether atoms or worlds, and, with equal ease, it binds a monad, swings a planet, or chains a system. Its laws are simple and invariable. Let science contend as to the mode; the facts are plain. Whether it be a power inhering in all matter, or an external power working through matter, the result is the same. There is that in every power that attracts; a power ceaseless, changeless, eternal. A power impalpable to the touch, invisible to the eye, incognizable by any of the senses; and yet, a power that works with tireless energy through all æons of time, bringing order out of confusion, harmony out of discord, and beauty and perfection from the conflicting congeries of the primordial elements.

The power of gravitation is in precise proportion to the bulk and density of its object. Given a world of sufficient size and density, and it becomes a centre about which every sun and system of the universe whirls in unvarying cycles, and every farthest and

smallest atom of creation, hears, and obeys the unspoken mandate.

In the realm of the intellect, and of the soul this law has its analogies. What atoms are to atoms, and worlds to worlds, so is mind to mind, and heart to heart. There is a universe of intellect, of feeling and of affection. A realm where thoughts, affections, purposes, yearnings, aspirations, will, are the atoms and molecules. With matter the power of attraction is fixed and definite. No atom can change its potency. With spirit the law is equally inflexible; but spirit has in itself possibilities to which the atom is a stranger. The spirit may advance from feebleness to power, from obscurity to the prominence of a central orb. A man may go down to the grave leaving no perceptible mark upon the world's thought; or, he may stretch across all continents and reach down all ages, and give current to the thought, and color to the life of men to the latest hour of time. Homer and Virgil, Moses and Plato, David and Paul swing about them the world's thinkers as the sun its satelites. The bearing of these facts upon our subject is obvious. Our text was the utterance of an obscure peasant of Galilee. He was destitute of wealth, fame, hereditary honors, or a following worthy of the name; and yet, he foretold a time when he should become the world's central magnet, attracting and binding all men to himself. The prophecy was stupendous. From any but the God-man it had been madness. No mere man may expect to sway the sceptre of universal empire. Human genius may thrill the nations, but it cannot bind them. It lacks the bulk and density that would make it a world centre. Distance weakens its grasp, time rusts it, attrition wears it. Its power declines in inverse proportion to the square of the distances. God alone can seize the hearts of earth's teeming millions, and give vitality to the cord that binds the weakest and furthest spirit atom to himself forever.

But, if the announcement was stupendous, the means by which it was to be accomplished was still more surprising. The Cross was the symbol of a

slave's torture. Inspiration itself had proclaimed, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." And, yet, the Cross was to become the world's centre. Christ crucified was to captivate all hearts and become the one object in which all men should glory, verily it was a prophesy that only history could vindicate.

The progress of eighteen centuries proves it true. The Cross has lost its shame, and has become the synonym of all virtue and nobleness, goodness and greatness. It has become an evangel in all lands, and it has won its triumphs from among all peoples. All men are its enemies, and yet everywhere the heart's enmities are subdued by its presence, and all souls are attracted by its silent power. Sinners become saints, and persecutors apostles at its mighty touch. It captures to liberate, binds to ennoble, humbles to transfigure and save. Who shall explain the mystery? Its shame has become its glory. This root out of dry ground has become the chiefest of ten thousand and altogether lovely. The hated, despised, persecuted, abandoned, crucified Nazarine is a king with hearts for an empire. He has brought desires, affections, impulses, yearnings, yea, even the imaginations into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Men count it their highest glory to suffer and even to die for him. They forsake home and country and friends; tread beneath their feet ease and fortune and fame; defy danger and persecution; accept toil and trial; live unknown, die unhonored for the sake of telling of his love, and of winning trophies for his cause. Such are the facts. They demand our most careful study. We inquire,

I. WHAT ARE THE LAWS OF SPIRITUAL ATTRACTION?

So far as we can see, everything earthly and heavenly is subject to laws. These laws may be unknown —perchance they are, by us, incomprehensible; yet, they exist, and by them, or in accordance with them, are the mightiest achievements produced. But the Cross is divine, and so is nature; and the salvation of the soul no less than the flowering of a shrub is in accordance with inviolable law.

Alike in nature and in grace it may be said, "And hitherto my Father worketh." What then are the laws of spiritual attraction?

1. The first condition of attraction is similarity of nature. I speak with reverence, Christ is Divine. I speak with emphasis, Jesus is man. Like only attracts like. Matter can never pass the bounds of the Divine decree and attract spirit. The Divine and the human must have something in common. Though broken and marred we still possess the Divine image.

Spirituality is nonforfeitable. God and man are eternally allied. We find that among men the soul is not insulated by either purity or impurity. Spirit attracts spirit whether up or down. God crosses the chasm of the infinite, and in the form of the finite stands by our side, speaks to our heart and draws our spirit. Beasts and birds may have somewhat in common with God as the spark is akin to the central sun, but they have not enough to lift them to divine contemplation and to twine about them the tether of divine attraction. Man feels in Christ the touch of a kindred spirit, and so is drawn by this power into newness of life.

2. The second condition of this drawing is superiority. In matter as we have seen attraction is regulated by density and bulk. Apples and stones fall to the earth. Stars swing around the sun. The heavenly systems are held in poise by worlds that the Divine hand has weighed and measured. The very clouds are balanced by this law.

In the world of spirit attraction depends upon two things, capacity, of both intellect and soul, and culture. Mind leads mind in proportion to its greatness as the sun leads the stars. Genius is sure of both a recognition and a following. Born in obscurity, or cradled in opulence, living in times of peace or amid the tumult and upheaval of national convulsions, mind recognizes its master and hastens to do obeisance to its rightful sovereign. Hence even savages have their heroes and demigods. Civilization boasts its leaders in Church and State; in philosophy, science, literature and art. And these, in proportion to

their greatness, and the culture of their intellects, control the thoughts and the faiths of men for an age or for the centuries.

And then, as distinguished from greatness of intellect there is a greatness of soul that shines out across the world's darkness, luminous as stars—great orbed spirits that stand like the light house upon the rocky reef, and fling the beams of a holy life athwart the troubled waters of time, to guide the lost mariner to haven and home. Unite these two and you have the greatest of earthly attractions. And so, just because of this, God, when known must ever be the one absorbing attraction. Men turn away from God because they do not know him. "O righteous Father," said Jesus, "the world hath not known thee." They look upward through the distorted medium of their own passions, with blinded eye, perverted taste and warped affections, and behold, God is a tyrant grasping the thunder bolts. Like Israel of old we flee from him with the cry, "Let not God speak to us lest we die." And yet, among all people, God is held to be the sum of all excellence. Sin has, indeed, reared its barriers and dug its impassable gulfs. The divine excellence was held to be incommunicable, but by a very necessity of reason God is the all perfect. And hence, the necessity of the incarnation. It was to unravel the contradictions, and to make plain the inexplicable. It was a revelation in human form of the Divine goodness and greatness, his character, and thought. The incarnation was infinite wisdom coming in contact with human thought, dissipating our darkness, broadening our vision and leading us out into the unfathomed and unfathomable depths of truth. It was Divine goodness coming in contact with human wretchedness and sin, and, though veiled in humanity, pouring upon our race a blaze of all but insufferable glory. What wonder if, when these are conjoined in Jesus, and concentered on Calvary, their influence goes out in ever widening circles, if all brains are busy with the problem, and all hearts are drawn by the spectacle of Christ crucified. He has moved along the plane of our being, and by the grandeur of his character and the infalli-

bility of his wisdom, he is captivating and drawing to himself the intellects and affections of the world.

3. The third law of spiritual attraction is the law of love. Love! queen of the graces, brightest gem that flashes in the coronet of creation's King. Crowning glory of his attributes. Mightier than Hope, that star which burns in the forehead of every night, that guides the weary pilgrim o'er desert strands and thorny paths and trackless wastes to the haven of rest; that cable of the unseen, that, reaching upward in the darkness, grasps the eternal throne. Greater than Faith, that inbreathing of the infinite, that unifies and magnifies all the forces of the soul, lifting weakness into strength, and nothingness to the very verge of almightiness. Love! the soul's inspiration, the power that uplifts, ennobles, sanctifies and saves; that power, subtle as thought, changeless as truth, lasting as eternity, resistless as God. It is the essence of the divine nature and the controller of the divine will. Love is the universal, all-potent power. This, when the spirit world has broken from its allegiance, and wandered off in rebellion towards the blackness of darkness, twines about it, binds it again to God, and bids it revolve about him in ever narrowing circles, as the center of its being forever. When man sinned, amid the all but universal wreck of innocence and uprightness, there was left one stone that was not overthrown on which the temple might again be built. He went forth an exile from paradise, but he carried with him one virtue to remind him of the glorious past and to point him to a brighter future. That corner stone, that undying virtue was the love of love. The one thing altogether lovely is not intellect, or truth, or virtue, it is love. This is a sun that never looses its lustre or its power. It shines through all clouds, lives through all death, reaches across all distances and binds the soul with fetters that neither bend nor break,

I go to the cell of the hardened criminal. He is cold, remorseless, defiant. The law crushes him, but every atom of that crushed being remains cruel, daring, desperate. Society spurns him, and like a wounded adder, with his dying breath he spits back the enven-

omed poison as his only reply. As I enter, he scowls upon me like a demon; I put my hand on his, and he starts back as though each of my five fingers had concealed a scorpion's sting. I speak of childhood and home and mother, and the demon fades from his face as the storm cloud vanishes from the summer sky; the voice grows husky and breaks beneath the old emotion, and the criminal is a child and a penitent. Love is the one power to which no human being can ever be indifferent. To know that I am loved by any, be it child, or beggar, horse or dog, is to enter at once into new relations with the one that loves me. Yesterday I was indifferent to them. To-day, they alone are conspicuous in the passing crowd. Their love has evoked my love. "We love him because he first loved us."

Such is the general principle of love, and such is its place among the powers that move the soul. But there are three things that constitute the degree of power which this love exercises upon the life of the loved. These are the dignity of the lover, the intensity of the love, and the degree of its manifestation. It is the province of love, of all love, to elevate and ennoble. The peasant girl who wakes to the fact that she is the object of a peasant's love, is thrilled, uplifted, ennobled by the fact. But if that lover be a prince, if he be of the royal family, if he sit upon the throne, how, as you ascend the scale, does that love become more and more potent. It invests her with new dignity. To be the object of royal love is to be worthy of royal honors. She accepts royal service and is transformed into the royal likeness. Again: love works in proportion to its intensity. It is the nature of love to be a devouring passion, a consuming fire. Persistent, tireless, discouraged by no rejection, turned aside by no repulse, besetting its object on every side, pouring out its treasures in kindly offices, until hatred gives place to interest, until interest changes into admiration and admiration ripens into affection. The vehemence of love is well nigh resistless. Reason is answered by reason, force by force; but love undermines and storms; it burns all barriers, and scatters

the contagion of its passion until its object catches the infection, when that object falls an easy prey, and is borne away in triumph in the face of all refusals.

Once more: love is potent in proportion to the degree of its manifestation. It is the nature of love to sacrifice. This is at once the gauge and measure of its truth and intensity. It covets to give. It yearns to sacrifice. It lays itself and its possessions at the feet of its object. It is no true love that stops like Ahazuerus and Herod of old at the half of its kingdom. And this giving of self for others is to-day the most potent of the world's forces. Sacrifice, even in the brute, elevates and endears them to us as can nothing else. My child is struggling in the waters and the noble dog plunges into the deep and brings it safe to land; henceforth that dog is to me almost as a second child. His home is beneath my roof. He has his place at my hearth and his food from my table. He is loved and caressed while living, wept and honored when dead.

Year by year we strew the graves of our dead heroes with flowers, and poet and orator recount to us the story of their sufferings and sacrifices. The mother of Cæsar gives her life to save that of her unborn babe, and straightway her praise is chanted by all nations and through all time. Three hundred Spartans sacrifice themselves at the pass of Thermopylæ, and they become the synonym of patriotism forever. To sacrifice one's self for another is to be ennobled by that act.

When Cyrus, the Persian, by a raid into Armenia, captured the royal family, he demanded of both the king and his son at what price each would be willing to ransom his wife. "At the price," said Tigranes, "of a thousand lives, if I had them." Afterward, when Tigranes asked his wife what she thought of Cyrus, the noble woman replied, "I did not observe him." "You did not observe him?" exclaimed the astonished husband, "upon what object, then, did you fix your eyes?" "I could only see the man," was the reply, "who was willing to give a thousand lives as the price of my liberty." It is this that lifts the Ida Lerves, the Florence Nightingales, steamboat pilots,

bridge tenders and miners into world-wide renown. It is this that in all ages and lands has freighted the name mother with all that is sacred and tender and noble and pure; and it is this that has lifted the name of Jesus above every name, that at his name every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Christ is God to the glory of God the Father. This, I take it, is the secret of the attractive power of Jesus. He reveals to me the fact that God loves me. If it thrills me to know that I am the object of a creature's love, what must be the emotion when I awake to the fact that the infinite God stoops to love, and yearns to embrace me? Can you wonder if, while memory is true to her trust, and the human heart capable of a sensation, the thought of that hour quickens and fires the soul as by a divine afflatus. Can you wonder if the soul be well nigh beside itself with joy when it feels itself encircled by the Divine arms and from sin and ruin it emerges into Divine likeness?

Now, this attraction increases as the evidences of the intensity of this love are multiplied. Love is a discerner. It may not create; its office is to reveal. The world is new-made to the Christian. Providence has a new meaning to the child of God. Nature is written all over, in every stone and brooklet, and mead and mountain, with the evidences of a Father's love. Earth is a mansion fitted up and garnished for his children by a Father's hand. Through ages before which the imagination staggers, God was preparing the earth for the home of man; rearing its mountains, spreading its plains, mixing the gases for its air and water, threading its rocks and silver, sowing its sands with gold, and foreseeing the coming frosts. He stored away in yonder valleys the fuel for a hemisphere. Behold its garniture of clouds, its enamel of flowers; hark to its music of birds. Behold creation at the Christian's feet and for his use. See, too, how every providence proclaims this love. The world's history, its joys and sorrows, its trials and triumphs, successes and failures all come with their instruction and warning, and conspire to lift me to the pin-

nacle of the world's glory and power. Science reveals to me the mysteries of nature, but between the lines I read the sentence. "My Father loves me." Philosophy may explain to me the laws of matter and of mind, but behind them I see my Father's plans for the world's government, and the minds unfolding. History may tell me of the rise and fall of nations, but amid it all I see my Father's finger pointing me to the only pathway of prosperity and power.

But this truth finds its culmination and highest exemplification in the Cross. Love finds its climax of power in the degree of its manifestation. But how shall I speak of that which defies description? Who can portray the passing of the infinite to the finite —the stooping of God to man—that act by which the Creator comes between the creature and his sins and lifts the sinner out of his sin into the joy and blessedness of a new and holy life—the act by which God becomes man to save man,—the love so fathomless that it led the Father to give his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life—that constrained Jesus, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, to lay aside the glory he had with the Father before the worlds were; to stoop to our vileness, to bear our burdens and to share our sorrows; to descend to the lowest and weakest, and worst of our kind; to shame the harlot into chastity, and to lift the thief into generous nobleness. The love that made him a homeless wanderer in the world of his own creation, that he might lead the homeless and hopeless back to his Father's house; the love that led him as a lamb to the slaughter; that, when he was nailed to the Cross breathed a prayer for his persecutors; the love that seized the Cross as the leverage of the world's uplifting, that mounted it as a throne of power and from its summit of agony shouted, "It is finished" to a dying world? This is beyond description. Behold at once the shame and the glory of the Cross! Behold how love transmutes the Cross into a throne of power, and the crown of thorns into an aureole of glory whose flashing splendors send light, and life, and

hope, and happiness, and heaven to the remotest verge of earth and to the last remnant of our shipwrecked tribes.

My brother, can you wonder that the Cross becomes an evangel in all lands and an attraction to all hearts? Can you wonder that men lifted by it into newness of life exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ?" Oh! I have seen the sun looking down upon the stagnant pool and lifting the putrid waters toward itself that they might come back in blessings on the land and pearls on the sea; but here, I see the Sun of Righteousness, from the Cross on Calvary, lifting the hearts of a blighted and ruined race to himself, that he may send them forth in his own image, at once the evidences of his power, and the demonstration of his love. I have seen the early spring coaxing the dried roots and tiny seeds of earth until, obedient to his voice they came forth to robe the earth with vernal splendors, and to scatter o'er lonely heath and rocky wild the fragrance of a thousand flowers. And the old oak, bleak and bare by the winter's blast, heard the summons, and from tiny rootlet to farthest twig, along every avenue, the life current has leaped and danced until every fibre was animate with life and every branch was crowned with summer glory. But here is a mightier marvel. Men, dead in trespasses and in sins, are drawn by this new power of the Cross out of the charnel house of vice, and every fibre becomes instinct with life. The entire manhood grows radiant with every virtue, and aglow with every splendor, that flashes in undying lustre from saint and seraph on the plains of light. I pass to notice

II. THE POWER OF THIS ATTRACTION.

We have seen the power of this attraction in matter. It binds worlds into systems and whirls them in unvarying harmony about their central sun. But the sun itself has a centre, and is flying through space with incredible velocity, dragging with it the planets and worlds that compose the system. Other suns and systems are swung by the same power.

Somewhere there must be a common centre—a world so vast, that it seizes every atom, and world, and sun, and system in the universe, binds all to itself, and preserves the harmony of the whole without a jar through the centuries. This power is beyond computation. The mind wanders across the illimitable fields of space until it is lost and bewildered by the rush of countless worlds. The imagination essays to explore and fathom the star depths, but it comes back on weary wing with the astonished cry, "Lo! these are but parts of his ways, but what a whisper of a word is heard of him, but the thunder of his power who can understand." And yet, this is but a feeble illustration of that power that has its centre in the Cross of Christ. If those worlds had broken away from the central orb, and, with fearful velocity had gone crashing through space, wrecking all of life and beauty that lay along their destructive paths, and, if then, that central world had reached down across the vast abysses, and seizing those wandering constellations, had tied them to itself, and restored the harmony of the universe, then there had been some analogy, but even then the analogy had been incomplete. That binds matter, this binds souls; every one of whom is perverse, rebellious, depraved; every one of whom is, in the very centre of his being, opposed to God.

He has not only broken away from the true soul centre, God, but he has formed for himself a new centre, selfish, sinful, degraded. About this centre twine every affection and power of the soul. To this new deity bows every attribute of the being in abject submission. How wonderful the power that untwines the souls tendrils from the sensuous and sinful, and lifts them to clasp the Cross with its ruggedness and shame—that turns back the flood of our depraved nature and bids the stream of our desires and yearnings flow upward to its God—that lifts the will, the ally and slave of sin, to be, amid trials, temptations, persecutions, death, the unchanging champion of truth and right. We measure force by the nature of the resistance it overcomes. Make this the test. Let

us see how the Cross overcomes in man all the forces of our depraved nature.

1. There is the love of ease. How men sigh for repose. They seek the clear sky, the thornless path, the unruffled stream: life without its conflicts, pleasure without pain, honor without its struggles; the Alpine heights without its glacier, its precipice or its avalanche. How the mass of men, rather than endure the conflict, place the reins upon the neck of their desires, until, bound hand and foot, like Mazeppa to his wild steed, they are borne to destruction and death.

The Cross lifts us out of our love of ease. It puts within us the "impulse of a new affection." It sways us with heavenly passion. We ask not for ease, but duty. We are freighted with responsibility. We are enamored with visions of usefulness. Our breath is devotion. We shake from us the nightmare of indolence. We spurn the couch of ease. We ask a place to toil. At home or abroad we are apostles, and pilgrims, and missionaries. His word is our law. His smile our heaven. His nod sends us to the ends of the earth. Our most earnest prayer is that we may cease at once to work and live.

2. There is the love of the world. Now, by the world I do not mean nature. This is God's world. Nor do I mean the duties and avocations of life. I mean that spirit of the world, or that pursuit of it, which, however innocent in itself, may come in between the soul and its God, and so cause an eclipse of the Sun of Righteousness. That world of which the apostle spake, when he said, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." We speak of it as the love of the pleasures, the honors, the wealth of the world. We know the strength of this love. For pleasure men have sacrificed wealth, and honor, and home, and health; for honor, riches and friends, principle and manhood; for wealth, ease and comfort, and truth and right. But what a metamorphosis is wrought by the Cross. And yet, the Christian is neither stoic nor ascetic. He is in the world, but not of it. Its pleasures are purified, its honors enno-

bled, its wealth consecrated to holy uses. Pleasure consists in the possession of our ideal. We sacrifice all things for that which to us is most lovely. But the Cross has lifted the veil from the face of God, and the Root out of dry ground has become the "chiefest of ten thousand and the one altogether lovely."

This vision of God explains the impassioned utterance of the old worthies: "Whom have I in heaven but thee and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee." "As the hart panteth after the water brooks so panteth my soul after thee, O God." This explains how men offer in one holocaust all that they hold dear, dashing to the earth every cup of sordid pleasure with the shout—

> "All thy pleasures I forego,
> I trample on thy wealth and pride;
> Only Jesus will I know
> And Jesus crucified,"

Not that the Christian is indifferent to place or power, or wealth: but he wins laurels to lay them at the feet of Jesus; he attains power that he may wield it for God; he gains wealth that with it he may push forward the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. He exemplifies the aphorism of Wesley, which is to "get all you can, to save all you can and to give all you can." The mean has become generous, the base magnanimous, the avaricious liberal. He is like yon reservoir, that turns upon itself a score of mountain streams, and then, rushing through all avenues, and streets, and lanes, and alleys, waits and yearns to slake the thirst of all, from the prince to the beggar. Oh it is being filled with God and overflowing as does he upon all about us.

Did it ever occur to you that all of beauty, of glory and of life is simply the overflowing of God? What is the glory of the morning but the overflowing of his light; what the beauty of the spring, the fragrance of the flower, the song of the bird but the overflowing of God in beauty, in fragrance and in song? What the enamelled cloud, the bursting bud, the waving grain and trembling leaf, but channels through which God is pouring his thought and love? The laughter

of childhood is the exuberance of his joy, and the tenderness of a mother's love, the outgushing of his sympathy. And it is to this height that the Cross uplifts us, and into this image it transforms us.

3. It is stronger than the love of friends. Jesus said if any man will come to me and hate not, i. e. love not less, father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and children, he cannot be my disciple. The other day there stood at my door a young man whose appearance indicated early comfort and culture. He said, "My father is rich, but he is an atheist. I went to a camp meeting and heard of Jesus. They told me of his love; that he loved me. I resolved to test it. I offered him my heart and he saved me. The story flew. It reached my father's ears. When I returned home he met me at the door and said, 'Give up your religion, or, leave my house forever.' And from that time, (two years had passed) I have been a homeless wanderer for the love of Jesus." I know not my brethren, whether he spoke truth; but I do know that it has been true of thousands. The love of Jesus has proved stronger than the love of country and home and friends and wealth. For his sake they have become homeless wanderers. They have taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and have "counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, the Lord."

4. And once more it is stronger than the love of life. "All that a man hath," said Satan, "will he give for his life." "He that hateth not his own life," said Jesus, "is not worthy of me." Satan lied. Many a soldier, thirsting for fame, has, amid the excitements of the charge, been reckless of life, and willing to die, if, thereby, he might go down to posterity wreathed with the immortelle of earthly glory, and numbered with the greatest of his country's heroes. The degraded Celt, lacking both culture and courage, maddened by passion and stimulated by numbers, has engaged in the riot regardless of life. But the Christian has neither the excitement of the charge, nor the stimulant of numbers, nor the hope of earthly glory. His battles are fought alone. His decisions

are made in the quiet of his chamber, and in the seclusion of his closet. They are made in the face of every allurement that wealth can offer and sophistry invent. Look at Daniel. He sees the plot of his enemies. On the one side are life, and wealth, and fame; on the other, the lion's den and the triumph of his foes. Did he hesitate? No. With his windows open towards Jerusalem, and his heart open toward God, he walked straight into the den of lions.

Look at the Hebrew children, daring the fiery furnace rather than deny their God. Look at Paul trampling upon ease and wealth and kindred and fame, saying to bonds and imprisonments and stripes, "None of these things move me." See, as to yon weeping friends he says, "What mean ye, to weep and break my heart, I am ready not only to be bound but to die at Jerusalem for the sake of the Lord Jesus." Look at the long array of martys; the men who kissed the stake and sung praises in the fire. Oh, there is a power in the Cross that lifts us out of sin and self; that makes God all in all. We sing, "give joy or grief, give ease or pain, take life or friends away;" and "I count not life dear unto me so that I may win Christ and be found of him, not having mine own righteousness, but the righteousness which is in Christ Jesus." Oh, is it not a luxury to live, and labor and die for him who died for me?

"For me my Lord was crucified,
For me, for me the Saviour died."

Such is the power of the Cross.

This is exemplified in the history of all peoples, and in all lands. The victories of the Cross are well nigh universal. It has elevated the degraded; it has refined the barbarous. It is the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, marching in the fore front of culture, civilization, nobleness, manhood. It lifts the world to the Beulah heights of glory, and transfigures dead souls until they shine in a Redeemer's coronet as "the brightness of the firmament and the stars forever."

III. LASTLY, SEE THE GLORY OF THIS ATTRACTION.

The Cross attracts, because, as nothing else does, or can, it reveals God. It conceals, while it unveils his glory. We see God only by the rays which converge on Calvary. I go out at noonday, and lifting my eyes to heaven, dare, for five minutes, to gaze upon the unclouded sun; and I am smitten with blindness for my temerity: but bye and bye there is seen in the Western sky a hand like cloud shooting straight from horizon to zenith and spreading its black wings northward and southword like an avenging spirit, wrapping the earth in a mantel of wrath. And now, from the eastern sky there comes another, black as the banner of night, rushing like a war horse to the charge. They meet in mid-air, with the roar of thunder, and the gleam and flash of forked lightning, that sets the heavens ablaze. Borne on the tempest's breath are rain and hail, that come like a deluge on land and sea; and anon, when the storm is hushed, when the sun, glowing like a ball of fire, hangs suspended over the western hill, while the hoarse thunder is dying away in the distance, and the cloud, like the banner of a retreating army, is slowly ascending the distant hills, there, on its departing folds the sun has imaged himself in the glory of the rainbow. I gaze upon it with eye undimmed. I drink in its wondrous beauty, I am entranced by its splendor. The noonday glories are diluted and accommodated to my organ of vision.

Brethren, thus is it with God. No man hath seen him at any time. We could not behold him and live. And so, God has shrouded his glories in the person of his incarnate Son. He set him down amid the toils and trials and tears of humanity and bid us see the Godhead shining through. See in the words he spake, in the miracles he wrought, and in the life he lived, the thought and purpose and glory of God. And then, on the Cross of Calvary he gathered up all of beauty and of glory that the human eye could bear or the heart endure, and through its pain, and death, and darkness he has proclaimed that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that

whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Yes, this is the glory of the Cross; it reveals God, and, revealing him, it saves man. Here is a sun that never sets, a tie that never breaks, a power that never wanes. For eighteen centuries it has been scattering the mists of prejudice, lifting the veil of ignorance, crushing the power of hate, and wringing adherents from the ranks of its enemies.

The man! Oh, how it lifts the entire man. How it enlightens the mind, convinces the judgment, purifies the affections, sanctifies the will, consecrates the energies of soul and body, for time, and for eternity, to God.

"All men." How blessed the promise; prince or beggar, sage or savage. Out from that Cross to-day is going a mysterious power that is grappling with all hearts. It claims all souls as his legitimate empire. They are his by right of purchase. He moves upon them now for conquest. Already its victories are marvelous. It has lifted Christians out of their denominational littleness and narrowness, and strife into the largeness and broadness of Christian sympathy. It has lifted nations out of barbarism, savagism and slavery into the culture and liberty of Christian civilization. It is lifting them out of fraud and oppression and wrong into the rights and privileges of the highest manhood.

The Cross is revealing the beauty of holiness, the sublimity of truth, the divinity of love, the grandeur of man, and the glory of God. It is attracting the gaze of the world. It is binding to itself the hearts of the nations; until, bye and bye, the last sinner, lifted from his sins and allied to his God, the universe shall swing about the Cross as its centre forever and ever. Amen.

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